

awry. I always find this to be the case whenever I try to integrate into a larger unit something that I worked out as a separate piece. That chapter was the outcome of the series of four lectures I delivered a few years ago in Boston. I find now that it doesn't give with the rest of the book.

Let me try to get my bearings on the question of Jewish education.

My problem is how to envisage the process of getting the child to live Judaism as a civilization or more specifically how to develop in the Jewish child a desire and capacity for participation in Jewish life, 2) the understanding of Hebrew language and literature, 3) putting into practice Jewish patterns of conduct, 4) appreciating Jewish sanctions and aspirations, 5) being creative or stimulating creativity in Jewish art.

Participation in Jewish life is represented by whatever concrete activities bring the child into touch with the reality of the Jewish people as a national being.

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| a. The congregation service | c. Local Federation ) |           |
|                             | )                     |           |
|                             | )                     | Keren Ami |
| b. Palestine Young Judea    | d. Universal Jewry )  |           |
2. Hebrew Language and Literature
    - a. Hebrew School      b. Public school      c. Camps
  3. Jewish patterns of conduct
    - a. Home      b. Hebrew School      c. Scout group      d. camps
  4. Jewish sanctions and aspirations
    - a. Home      b. School      c. Synagogue      d. Club
  5. Jewish arts
    - a. School      b. Club      c. Camp      d. Artistic groups

(Somehow it is usually after the mental travail which finds expression in irritability and a sense of despondency at the difficulty





of finding a solution that a worthwhile idea is born. I think this is happening now. I have never seen the Jewish educational problem in such light as I am now describing.)

The foregoing analysis of the aim of Jewish education ought to revolutionize our conception as to the agency by which the educational process ought to be carried on. Instead of placing the entire burden of education upon the Hebrew school -- a burden far too huge for it to carry even under the most ideal conditions -- it should be divided among the various functioning agencies in Jewish life, care being taken that their efforts should not clash but be coordinated.

This involves impressing all the communal agencies into the work of educating the Jewish child for Jewish life.

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Thursday, August 28, 1930

This is a great life! To sit carefree in a genially warm sun the better part of the day and to keep on reading and writing and to feel that one's ideas about life are falling into their proper places giving to life a certain order and design and meaning -- this is paradise. This is the way I have been spending my time the greater part of the ten weeks that I have been here in West End. Not that this state of placid serenity is unbroken by the thought that this bliss cannot last forever, that millions of people are out of work or are afflicted with some fatal disease, that the status of the Jews throughout the world is still very doubtful. But I was at least able to shake off these thoughts for a time and to go on with my work.

I have just referred to my work. What is it? To help redeem Jewish life in this country from the primeval chaos into which it has been thrust. And then what? A strange simile comes to mock me. There is a craze just now known as Tom Thumb Golf, an imitation of what





may be called the Rich man's golf. In place of the rolling acres of turf as playground a small section of hard pavement is covered with artificial grass and supplied with a few obstacles a few feet away from each other, a miniature or premature Golf course. Is this Jewish civilization for Jews in this country to be a sort of Tom Thum Golf course? I almost laughed myself out of court when this analogy occurred to me. But then I said to myself, "Granted. On the other hand what is there so inherently superior to a rich man's golf course? Isn't that too a joke? Going to all that expense and toil so that a rich fat man may have an opportunity to drive a tiny little ball? Aren't our great and powerful civilizations glorified artificialities like the rich man's golf?"

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The good news that the Mandate Commission of the League have scored the British Government for their mishandling of the Palestine situation has given me new life and hope.

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The traditional values of religion had the advantage of being unaffected negatively by the every day happenings. No matter what the Jews suffered it never occurred to them to doubt the divine meaning of the world of human history and their central place in both. We however who insist upon ourselves experiencing the divine meaning of life can never know what peace of mind is, because we keep on watching the skies and are fearful of every passing cloud.

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I should like to make a study of the meaning of meaning, not in the manner of the book recently published under that name, but with a view to discovering the psychological factors involved in the intellectual joy we experience when the acquisition of meaning on the part of certain phenomena add new zest to our life as a whole. First I would





want to know just what occasions the experience of meaning. That experience is esthetic in character and therefore occasioned by aesthetic phenomena ~~phenomena~~ to a very large extent. One should find a great deal in Havelock Ellis' Dance of Life that would throw light upon the connection between meaning and beauty. When I read that book a few years ago it had a very profound effect on me. In making me aware of the reality of beauty it gave me something concrete with which to counter the quantitative conception of life. By the way, is not regarding reality as solely quantitative the real ~~antithesis~~ antithesis to the spiritual outlook and the essence of materialism rather than the belief in the indivisible atoms of matter?

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Monday, September 1, 1930

Last Friday I received a copy of the book on "Intelligent Philanthropy" which includes the article on "Jewish Philanthropy: Traditional and Modern" which I wrote two summers ago. My mother who was here in West End with us for the last five weeks, read the article with great avidity. I was afraid that as soon as she would start reading it she would take offense at my denial of the traditional conception of the Torah. She evidently read the beginning too hurriedly to grasp fully its meaning, and as she kept on reading was very much delighted with the number of rabbinic passages quoted in the text. In fact she repeated more than once that she was especially grateful for having been persuaded to remain over this weekend with us, otherwise she probably would not have known about the article. Yesterday, however, an hour before her leaving she seemed rather sad. When I came near she got up from the couch on which she was lying restlessly and said to me, "There is something in the book I don't quite understand and which I don't think I like." Then turning to the first page of the article and pointing to the sentence, "We regard as untenable the tradition that





Moses" etc. she asked me to explain that sentence to her and to tell her the meaning of the word untenable. Of course I told her exactly what the words meant. The scales fell from her eyes. "That's the old trouble over again," she said bitterly.



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Last Saturday night Lena and I visited the physician and noted neurologist, Dr. E. D. Friedman. His other visitors were Drs. Danzis (of Newark), Kleinberg and Grossman and Mr. Semel and their wives. We no sooner sat down at the table than the discussion turned upon Judaism. Both Kleinberg and Grossman evinced total ignorance not only of the Yiddishist movement but of the difference between a Yiddishist school and an old time Heder where the rebbi used to teach in Yiddish. Being used to finding our people crassly ignorant of Jewish life, I was only too happy that they became sufficiently aroused to want to know something, and I proceeded in calm fashion to dilate upon the Yiddishist movement. When I got through Semel launched forth into a violent tirade ~~up~~ against the physicians for displaying so little interest in things Jewish. He made his remarks especially pointed by reminding them that they had not been born in this country. He even implied that they could hardly speak English correctly. And that such men should be so ignorant, he said, hurt him to the core.

When he got through Dr. Danzis asked "What do you mean by Jewish life?" I tried to answer him by quoting to him his experience with the patients he tries to save. Does he know the nature of the lives he tries to save? Is it not enough for him to know the reality of life? Semel answered by itemizing the movements and institutions of Jewish life. "then," said the doctor, "it is merely the life of a group. Why then do the rabbis keep on telling me that we are a more spiritual more ethical and in a thousand other ways a more perfect people?"





Up to this point Semel and I cooperated in the apologetics for Judaism. At this point, however, we parted company.

He replied to Danzis' last statement by saying "Why have I not the right to think that my wife is the most charming, my home the finest and my family life happier than any other?"

I took issue with this attitude, which was apparently a justification of the p.48 idea. I maintained that within the last twenty-five years a radical change has taken place in the consciousness of the Jew, a change of which even Semel seemed ignorant. Instead of emphasizing our superiority we content ourselves with emphasizing our individuality, an individuality attested by our entire past. We also do not claim to be better than any other people. Our right to existence is not contingent upon present superiority, but upon our capacity to be creative in the future.

(Next day Dr. Kleinberg and I met on the beach. Referring to the discussion of the previous evening I added that I retain the idea of but I eliminate the idea of .)

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The afternoon of last Saturday I spent also arguing that we should not base our right to existence upon our being a superior people. That time, however, it was against two men who believed that we actually were a superior people, J. D. Eisenstein, the editor of the Hebrew Encyclopedia and compiler of ever so many other collections of Hebrew writings, and Rabbi Metz.

Incidentally I must add that when J. D. Eisenstein had told me in the morning that he would come to see me I was rather taken aback. I had always looked upon him as strictly Orthodox in his views and an outspoken antagonist of the Seminary. He is in his 76th year. Consequently I wondered what could he and I talk about without immediately clashing in our views. Then again there was mother sitting in the house





near the window about which Eisenstein, Metz, Rabbi Eugene Kohn, Hyams  
(a fellow-<sup>student</sup>~~student~~ at the seminary of Ira Eisenstein, a <sup>grandson</sup>~~grandson~~ of the  
old man) and a local Hebrew teacher, Kimmel, were seated. I was there-  
fore more than pleased when I found that I could expound my views openly  
and frankly while the old man Eisenstein sat calmly listening. To what  
shall I attribute this change of attitude? To the fact that his grand-  
son is a student at the Seminary and that I am taking an interest in  
him? That would mean then that one ounce of friendship and personal  
interest is worth more than a pound of argument.

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Dr. Ira Kaplan, a nephew of mine by marriage, is a strictly  
observant Jew. His adherence is of so a naive type that I haven't been  
able to fathom it to this day. His religiosity, however, escapes being  
offensive because he has quite an appreciation of ethical values and  
will go to any lengths to help any one in distress.

Last Saturday night he happened to come over to the house with  
his eleven year old son, David. He at once expressed his joy over the  
fact that David of his own account had attended daily minyan in camp.  
Remarking then about David's general interest in Judaism, he said that  
if it weren't for little Edwin who belongs to the "ritzy" member of our  
family and to a lesser degree Harvey (Dr. <sup>Isidore</sup>~~Isidore~~ Rubin's young son)  
David would have shown much more progress in his Jewish studies. Little  
Edwin's mind has evidently been poisoned by his brother Arthur (see  
somewhere in previous volume).

Yesterday Joe Levy voiced to me his unhappiness over his  
daughter Miriam's phobia against Jews and Judaism. He hadn't even  
dared, he said, to suggest to her that she come to stay with him at the  
Takanassee Hotel here where he was stopping over the weekend. Her in-  
fluence over her younger sister Selma cannot<sup>but</sup>~~be~~ be baneful. "I am glad,"  
he added, "that Miriam is going back to Wisconsin University and will





away from the house for the next year. Can you imagine what a terrible thing it is for a father to have to be glad that his child is away from his home for a year?" I know of one other bright girl whom Miriam has alienated from Judaism - Dorothy Mann. Dorothy refused to become Bas Mitzvah a few years ago. I believe that this was due chiefly to Miriam's influence. (I refer to Miriam in one of the previous volumes.)

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The foregoing which I have recorded today are like sketches in an artist's note book. In this small compass you may count almost twenty five people (if you include some of the wives who come in as supernumeraries). A novelist would have no difficulty in weaving a story about this group and giving to each character some part that would bring to light individual traits and their reaction to their situation as Jews, fanatical Jews, naively pious Jews, indifferent and apathetic Jews, more or less intelligent defenders of Jewish life, rabidly anti-Semitic Jews. All these I encountered within twenty-four hours.

Some children are nothing but the penalty their parents pay for not having used contraceptives.

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Wednesday, September 3, 1930

I have been in a black mood again the last couple of days. I have not been able to make any headway with my writing. On top of that came the letter from mother asking me to recant. The letter made me feel ashamed of her and her religion. In it she tried to bribe me with the promise of popular acclaim and to threaten me that I would be the cause of her losing her mind. In my reply to her letter I tried to be as restrained as I possibly could, but naturally I could not refrain from telling her that she was exploiting her weakness to the utmost in asking me to be false to myself and my convictions.





I seem to have reached for a while a saturation point in dealing with abstract ideas and ideals. Wanting to steep myself in the seething chaos of life but being condemned to a career of impotent spectatorship, the only thing to do is to pick up some book which might at least give me a picture of the grim realities. This is how despite the approaching holidays and the multitude of perfectly stupid and useless things that will soon have to occupy my days I put everything aside and read through today Michael Gold's Jews Without Money. And I am not in the least sorry that I did it. It has had the effect on me that Aristotle ascribes to Greek tragedy. The book had been in my house for the last few months, but I refrained from reading it because from the opinions that some people gave me of it I thought it was another one of those East Side literary garbage cans that Ornitz began parading with his Hanneh <sup>Paruch</sup> ~~Paruch~~ and Jowl. Instead I found myself reading a veritable martyrology of the Jewish people.

The book cured me of the superficial and light hearted tirade I was going to launch against our people for doing nothing to prevent gangsterism and racketeering. I realized as I never did before that these festering sores in the body of our people are the outcome of the American capitalistic order. If there is any charge that one has a right to bring against our people it is the charge not of heartlessness but of stupidity. If as a people we possessed any gleam of intelligence we ought to have acclaimed a book like Jews without Money as the outcry of a prophet whose heart writhes with pain over the sufferings not alone of his people but of all suffering humanity. I would go out of my way to claim Michael Gold as a Jew of Jews much sooner than I would to claim Spinoza. How much pathos and passion for righteousness in the last page!

#"At times I seriously thought of cutting my throat....I developed a crazy streak...I prayed on the tenement roof in moonlight





to the Jewish Messiah who would redeem the world...

"A man on an East Side soap-box, one night, proclaimed that out of the despair, melancholy and helpless rage of millions, a world movement had been born to abolish poverty.

"I listened to him.

"O workers' Revolution, you brought hope to me, a lonely suicidal boy. You are the true Messiah. You will destroy the East Side when you come, and build there a garden for the human spirit.

"O Revolution, that forced me to think, to struggle and to live.

"O Great Beginning!"

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Saturday night, September 6, 1930

Last night Lionel and Rita Bernstein visited with us. The conversation began with my trying to find out why with so many interesting things in life to read about and discuss people resort to card playing. Last Thursday night I had watched some of my nephews playing bridge, and tried to learn the rules of the game. I found the whole procedure extremely boring. This led me to ask my niece and nephew the above question. The answer they gave was that card playing took the mind off the daily worries by virtue of the social contacts and the game spirit which it made possible. This led to the discussion of culture as an escape. From that angle there was a great deal of truth in what Lionel said. As long as he had few or no responsibilities he spent his leisure hours in reading and becoming acquainted with some of the best authors, but since his cares multiplied he gave up reading.

I suggested that perhaps the very notion of culture as an escape was wrong. It ought to be a means of growth. In order to be that, however, it ought to be related to the vital problems of human life. It ought to deal with economics, psychology, politics, etc. The proper way to cultivate cultural interests of that character is to engage some one





who might act as leader, and conduct group discussion.

The conversation then drifted to the sense of insecurity which beclouds the mind of the average business man, and the unhealthy state of business which is responsible for the unethical measures which are resorted to in order to keep going. When for eg. the legitimate profits are driven down to so low a figure that it is impossible for a businessman to exist he resorts to extorting allowances and puts in claims that the shipments sent him contained damaged goods. One of the firms Lionel dealt with, Scheras, accounted respectable people in the community, known to be quite generous with their philanthropies and in their treatment of poor relatives have grown rich in this kind of ~~extort~~ extortion and robbery. They are recorded in a credit agency as given to putting in false claims.

Why is it impossible to emancipate oneself from the vise in which one is held by illegitimate business? Because, said Lionel, "We have to keep<sup>up</sup> with the Joneses. Mainly responsible for this tyranny are the women of today. They take for granted that they are entitled to have every luxury their heart desires, and that their husbands must slave if need be to make it possible for them to lead carefree and parasitic lives. As proof he quoted the falling out Rita had with Goldie, Semel's daughter, because she upbraided Goldie for saying that a wife's function begins and ends with bringing children into the world and she does not even have to bring them and educate them. I am not so sure that Goldie said that. From the reply that Lionel said he made to her I suspect that what she really did say was that the woman was entitled to ease and luxury because she gave her body to her husband for sexual gratification. Of the ten women who were present when Rita had this discussion with Goldie only two shared her resentment at Goldie's attitude.





It seems to me that if a man like Semel were to have devoted his energies to bringing up his own children properly he would have achieved more good in the world than he does through his efforts in getting money for the Jewish education of other children. But then people don't always engage in public causes to achieve good.

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Tuesday, September 9, 1930

Yesterday and today I met the majority of the students of the Seminary for the purpose of giving them material for the High Holiday sermons which they will have occasion to preach the coming Rosh Hoshanah and Yom Kippur. I have also resumed the meetings with Rabbis Hurwitz, Signer and Jacob Grossman. Rabbi Melamed has also attended the sessions.

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Thursday, September 18, 1930

We returned to the city last Saturday night to be in time for the Selihot services at 12:30 midnight.

I have been in an upset state of mind ever since I got back, due mainly to my having to do things I regard as on the whole quite useless. The preparation of the sermons for the High Holidays takes away a good deal of my time at this season of the year, and in addition I presided at two long sessions of the Seminary admission committee interviewing applicants.

Tonight the opening session of the Teachers Institute took place. Again I went through the ordeal of having to make a speech in Hebrew, but thank God I spoke without a hitch and made no breaks.

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Monday, September 22, 1930

I am just now trying to polish up the statement in the beginning of "Judaism as a Civilization" which bears on the question of exclusive salvation. The matter is as plain as a pikestaff. The Jews



held in common with all Christian and Mohammedan believers that the goal of life was in the world as it will be after God will have changed the present order, and with them agreed that only those who gave their allegiance to the revealed will of God were qualified for life in the world to come. Yet simple as this fact is there is not a single Jewish writer past or present that seems to grasp it. Maimonides is so entangled in Aristotelianism that he can't see straight. To him <sup>7" re Hek</sup> p.53 is the doctrine of bodiless immortality which has come down from Greek philosophy. The modern writers fall over themselves trying to prove that the Jews offered free admission to everybody. N. Guttman and J. Z. Lauterbach resort to all kinds of pilpulistic sophistry to prove their point. I actually tremble with indignation that men noted for scholarship should be so obtuse in so simple a matter. What then could be expected of them in matters that are inherently difficult and complicated?

I consulted the Jewish Encyclopedia to see whether it had anything on Olam, Halba or Other Worldliness. Not a word. Under the heading salvation, Emil G. Hirsch discusses the meaning of and and it never occurs to him that he was on the threshold of the most significant idea of the great traditional religions. What an idiot!

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Monday, September 29, 1930

The sale of seats at the SAJ brought in this year \$22,000 as compared with the \$26,000 last year. Considering the general economic depression this is quite a remarkable record. In comparison with the intake of the other congregations in the neighborhood the SAJ did well. According to Miss Machlowitz I am the chief attraction. And suppose I am. After the holidays everything is forgotten. What a Sysiphus affair, this trying to keep Judaism alive in this country!





The only redeeming feature in this heartbreaking strain year in and year out is the birth of an idea in the course of the sermonizing that I am driven to do. The idea this time evolved out of the preparation for the first day of Rosh Hashonah. It has to do with the nature of religion. Religion, I said, is a means of proclaiming, rendering and maintaining life worthwhile. This may serve as a criterion to help us distinguish between religion and superstition. The three functions named must be present, otherwise there is something wrong with <sup>the</sup> religion. The function of proclaiming is fulfilled in the element of worship, the element of rendering and maintaining in the ethical ideals and standards of conduct.

This conception of religion is an outgrowth of the thinking that I did during the summer. I somehow feel it is the most fruitful conception of religion I have so far been able to arrive at. Hoffding got very near it with his suggestion that the function of religion was the conservation of values. I don't think he says "values." There is all the difference in the world between value and values. As he defines religion it is merely a bulwark of reaction. I don't believe he was aware of the implications in the notion of worthwhileness. The more I think of it the more I feel it is that quality of Reality which is broken up by the prison<sup>ing</sup> of the mind into the elements of truth, goodness and beauty. Whence does that quality arise? The answer is to be found in the saturation as it were of Reality with human self-consciousness. Apart from consciousness Reality is quantitative only. Consciousness ~~mix~~ endows reality with pain and pleasure. Self-consciousness endows it with the quality of worthwhileness. So long as worthwhileness is not broken up by the mind it gives rise to religion in which the true the good and the beautiful are undifferentiated. Later with the emancipation of the arts worthwhileness is spelt out into truth, goodness and beauty. Yet if we examine each of these elements more deeply we





find it related to the other two through the experience of worthwhile-ness which is the matrix of them all.

Then there is also the interesting fact that while it may be impossible to answer the question Why or Wherein may life be regarded worthwhile? the wiser procedure is to deal with the problem of How to make and keep life worthwhile. When we answer that, the question wherein or why will be solved automatically. This is true not only of life in general but also of the principal embodiments of life, such as the individual and the group. By endeavoring to find ways and means of making and keeping our own individualities worthwhile, or the groups to which we belong we shall remove all doubt as to the wherein or why.

And so from whatever angle I view this idea of worthwhileness I find it extremely fruitful and satisfying. p.55

And waht I have had since I have returned to the city!

First it has been the Teachers Institute. After all the trouble I went to in making arrangements with Teachers College to permit those taking our teachers training courses to pursue their general studies at TC we find ourselves with few students entering our teachers training department. Benderly has been draining off the best material in the ~~student~~ student body of the High Schools for his own Kvuzoth. I have made up my mind not to permit him to keep on dealing in this high handed fashion with the money he gets from Federation. I am one of the Board of Trustees of the Bureau. He doesn't even think it necessary to call a meeting of the Board or render a report. Today I laid the entire matter before Adler. Dinin and Chipkin were with me when I explained to Adler what Benderly has been doing. It had taken me a long time before I made up my mind to fight Benderly. In a way it was really the pressure brought to bear upon me at the last Faculty meeting of the TI (Friday, Sept. 19) that made me take this step. God knows what it will lead to. It certainly means a war which I have been trying to



avoid with all my might. But Benderly is only another Wilhelm II in peto.

The Seminary so far hasn't provided me with any special cause for unhappiness except the general wear and tear resulting from encounters with the other members of the Faculty. My nerves are frayed every time I have any dealing with Davidson. This time it was on account of the Intelligence test administered by Dr. Maller. Davidson and Finkelstein tried hard to minimize the importance of those tests. It so happens that I have been officially appointed chairman of committee on admissions and am in a position to have my way in the matter of admissions to a far greater degree than ever before. But with what labor! It is a continual uphill fight against sheer stubborn stupidity. For the first time in years applicants were examined in proper form and the report on the admission of those who qualified rendered and passed upon in a manner that saved everyone from the terrible and useless ordeal of having every student considered singly and interviewed by the entire faculty in session.

But the greatest source of annoyance and vexation at this time of the year has been the SAJ. Like a harbinger of a plague Rosenblatt accosted me the Sabbath before Rosh Hashanah and started pestering me that I should compromise on the matter of the Kol Nidre. I told him that I regarded the question closed and begged him not to discuss it with me any further. For a few days after that I began to sense a storm gathering. A letter arrived from J. Klein in which he practically threatened that he would resign from the presidency if we will not restore the Kol Nidre. Then Joe Levy called on me last Sunday with the request that I do something to quiet the growing discontent. He and I finally decided that I should meet some of the ringleaders of the agitation and try to persuade them not to have the Kol Nidre restored. Harry Liebovitz had arranged for a dinner to take place tonight at the





yacht room of the Astor Hotel to consider the financial situation of the SAJ. Levy arranged that I should meet those who expected to be at the dinner for an hour or so before the dinner. I followed his suggestion and <sup>came</sup> ~~came~~ to the hotel a little before six this evening.

The following were present at the discussion: 1. Jacob Levy, a confirmed moron who rolls in wealth. He takes trips around the world and fills his house with junk that he picks up on his travels. 2. Schwarz, a simple minded youthful looking non descript, incapable of following an idea which has to be expressed in more than one sentence, too poor to do any good even if he wanted to yet has enough money to be a source of trouble. 3. Bernard Semel, an outstanding type of Eastern Jew who is warm hearted and has wide interests. He has a knack for telling stories and making the impression on our inarticulate laymen that he is a matchless speaker. He is as full of sophistries as a dog of fleas and has been spoiled by adulation. He believes he is unequalled as a communal leader and his wife agrees with him. 4. Jacob Klein, an ignorant, muddlehead, good hearted lawyer who has his office walls covered with letters from Magnes and other communal leaders telling him how well they think of him. He probably can't understand why in all the years I haven't sent him a frameable letter. 5. Solomon Lampert, a man who has more learning and good sense than all the rest put together who never says the right word at the right time and who always turns out to be abroken <sup>reed</sup> ~~XXXXXX~~ if you rely on him. 6. Abraham Siegel, a wealthy cigar manufacturer over 70 years old, forever glorying in the fact that the late Dr. Meltzer was a cousin of his. He takes it all in and gives out nothing. 7. Harry Liebovitz, means well and puts in more real work on the SAJ than all the rest put together but not sufficiently sure of himself to be of much help to one who stands for an unpopular cause. 8. Albert Rosenblatt, a typical shul president who ruins congregations by trying to please everybody in order to be able





to get everybody interested in some other organization in which he holds high office. 9. Wachman, the most sterling character in the group but totally inarticulate, and 10. Joe Levy, the strongest supporter I have had in the SAJ who has stood by me more loyally than anybody else, but who unfortunately does not possess enough social prestige nor is a sufficiently liberal giver to command much influence.

This group of men went at me hammer and tongs for over two hours. They bullied, they cajoled, they flattered me to get me to yield. I held out to the end. At first the discussion turned on the Kol Nidre as such. Under no circumstances would I consent to its reinstatement. When it was suggested that only the first two words be retained and also the passage p. 58 I replied in the same way as I had done in previous years, viz: that if an appropriate text can be devised I might acquiesce. They insisted that I adopt the text quoted in translation in this week's American Hebrew by Ellbogen and have it recited this very Yom Kippur. I told them that they had time all year to bring the matter up and to thresh it thoroughly. But it would be childish to act in so serious a matter as change of the liturgy on the spur of the moment. We might introduce the new version next year. But this year we would have to adhere to what has now become officially the practice of the SAJ. Nothing would move me from that decision.

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At the conference this afternoon with Dr. Adler he told a story worth recording. We were talking about the importance of having a college of Jewish studies where young people would have an opportunity of getting a Jewish education without intending to use it professionally. Chipkin then chimed in with the remark that as a result of his experience with Jewish leaders who hold the fate of Judaism in their hands he was convinced that all our ills are due to their imperious ignorance of Judaism. The whole complexion of Jewish life would be changed if he added, we had an educated laity.



Adler took exception to Chipkin's statement. To prove that education or half education is more of a hindrance than a help when it comes to getting support for Jewish learning he mentioned the following incident. The Jewish Quarterly which had been heavily supported by Claude Montefiore was about to cease appearing. When Adler learned what was to happen to the Quarterly he proposed to the members of the Board among whom were Judge Sulzberger, Dr. Friedenwald, Dr. Solis Cohen (?) and one or more "educated" Jews that the Dropsie College contribute \$2000 a year to enable the Jewish Quarterly to continue. Every one of them refused to give his consent. The only one who spoke up for it was an ignorant business man who probably did not even know the meaning of archaeology. "What is this Dropsie College for" he asked. "Is it not to promote learning? How can you promote learning unless it be put in print?" His argument won over the rest.

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Saturday night, October 4, 1930

I have had my way in the matter of the Kol Nidre after all at the services this Yom Kippur. Now everything will be forgotten until the next Yom Kippur comes around. So far the Kol Nidre problem is the only one which has really agitated the SAJ. The only achievement I am associated with in the mind of the layman is the abolition of the Kol Nidre. And he does not love me for that "achievement" either. He adores the Kol Nidre melody and regards it as a beautiful prelude to the Atonement Day service. He likes the sonorousness of the Kol Nidre text which fits the melody and he is not bothered by the irrelevance of what the text denotes.

This caricature of what I am trying to do with Judaism is the bane of my life. I imagine that if I were to give up the SAJ and devote myself solely to writing that I would finally succeed in getting myself understood. I believe that the sense of futility of working with





the kind of people that go to make up the SAJ is a drain both on my energy and enthusiasm. When this belief gets hold of me I become morose because of the considerations that inhibit me from acting on it. These considerations are first, the fact of being deprived of an income totalling between six and seven thousand a year, and secondly, the fear that by having that income cut off I would not have the necessary mechanical facilities for doing whatever literary work I have in mind to do. Unfortunately I cannot write anything without having to correct it almost a dozen times before I would care to have it published. I need an amanuensis, I need books and, above all, freedom from financial worries. All these things I would lack if I were to give up the SAJ. So what would I accomplish by resigning?

This problem is further complicated now by my having engaged Ira Eisenstein as executive director. If the people of the SAJ would only manifest the least tendency to carry out any constructive measure, say to make possible the publication of a magazine, I would feel that I am doing the right thing in asking him to sacrifice such an opportunity as is now presenting itself to him of becoming the rabbi of one of the largest communities in this country. (I refer to the Mishkan Tefila congregation in Boston before which he preached these High Holidays.) I am quite sure he made a good impression with his preaching and conduct of the services. But if I have no faith in the SAJ is it not wrong of me to insist upon his turning a deaf ear to their overtures which I am sure they will make to him? I practically put the matter to him in these words in my conversation with him yesterday. He is very modest in his expectations with regard to the Boston congregation. He is not so sure he says that he would be asked to accept its pulpit. They want an older man. But on the other hand I could see that his mouth watered so to speak for a community of that kind. He spoke quite wistfully of its homogeneity and its tremendous population as well as of its receptive mood. So what shall I do?





This predicament of mine illustrates of how little value this modern psychology is in helping a person to solve his problems of conduct. I read a good deal about the tendency to resort to subterfuge when confronted with a trying situation. Everyone is urged to have the courage of facing Reality and warned against fleeing it. But how am I to know which solution constitutes facing Reality? Is remaining in my present position and going through daily the tortures of hell as I contemplate the heartbreaking unresponsiveness of the SAJ to all my efforts the form which in my case the duty of facing Reality ought to take? Am I to regard this yearning to retire to my books and to write merely as a yearning for escape? Or vice versa, Is not ~~am~~ The Reality in this case doing the thing that might bring about most fruitful results? And is not continuing my present connection with the SAJ nought but an escape?

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Tuesday, October 7, 1930

My mind is out of breath trying to catch up with all the books and articles that it ought to be abreast of. It has been a trying experience for me to realize fully the handicap I am laboring under as a result of my being a slow reader. I happened to order a little book that has appeared recently entitled "The Art of Rapid Reading" by Walter B. Pitkin. Instead of spending the time last night in digesting the idea of the sermon I had prepared for today I read that book. Testing myself by one of the exercises given in it I found that it took me just twice the amount of time to read them through that it should. I am not so gullible as to be taken in by the W. B. Pitkin thesis about the indispensable value of reading skimmingly. It seems to me that anything worth reading is worth reading well. Otherwise it shouldn't be read at all. I would raise the same protest against rapid reading as Fletcher raised against rapid eating. An idea has got to



be chewed over to be assimilated. Nevertheless I do need to improve my eye grasp. Not having had the right or for that matter any kind of training in reading when I was young I lack the quick eye grasp that young people seem to have nowadays.

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Wednesday, October 8, 1930

Yesterday afternoon Mr. Abe Liebovitz and his wife and their son-in-law Wener and his wife, a recently married couple, paid us a Yom Tov visit. I think it is the first time in the history of the SAJ that parents have visited <sup>me</sup> together with their grown up children. Although I stand in well with the older folks of the organization, the young people keep entirely aloof from me, as if I belonged to a different world from theirs. There is more chance of parallel lines meeting than the interests I cherish with those which fill the lives of the sons and daughters of our members.

The conversation opened with their remark about the fine weather we have been having these holidays. For want of anything better to say I remarked, "Thank Goodness the weather isn't anti-Semitic." At this the company brightened up and we were faring capitally ~~well~~ for a while, when without notice Mrs. Liebovitz popped the question What I thought of the possibility of doing away with the second day holiday. I inferred from her question that she was in favor of abrogating useless and burdensome institution. Without further ado I blurted out my favorite plan to get the members of the SAJ to pledge themselves in writing to observe the first day of each of the holidays properly as a prerequisite to my abrogation of the second day. Abe Liebovitz expressed his assent, but his wife began raising all kinds of objections. The young people paralleled their elders. It was ridiculous of me to discuss such a matter with them, but what is one to do? Simply to sit back and do nothing?





Before long the conversation verred to the topic "Why the young folks are indifferent to Judaism." It had no point. The young Mrs. Wener, a simpering feminine fop, launched into a tirade against the young folks. "They" and "they" and "they" as if she ever made the least attempt to do or learn anything Jewish in her capacity as one of the young folks.

When people fall into this vein of discourse I am totally non-plussed. How can one fight against a vacuum? Right after they left old man Siegel who is about to celebrate his 71st birthday stopped me on the street and began condoling with me about my trying to work with the wrong kind of <sup>people.</sup> ~~people.~~ When I asked him what about his own children -- I think he has seven able bodied <sup>sons</sup> ~~sons~~ all successful business men and one daughter -- he replied that they were affiliated with the Ethical Culture group. This irritated me and I almost went off the handle, but I checked myself in time. I could see that he wasn't so happy about their ethical culture affiliation, yet I doubt whether he enjoyed having vinegar poured into his wounds.

Believe it or not there is a possibility of my changing my mind about the Kol Nidre and advocating its restoration in the Yom Kippur service. The correspondence between J. D. Eisenstein and myself especially the letter of Oct. 5, has made me see the question in an entirely new light. I do not recall ever having heard or read anywhere an argument in defense of Kol Nidre that sounded so plausible as the one advanced in the letter of October 5. I intend to give further thought to the question and if after a few weeks I will find the argument as plausible as it sounds to me at present I shall not hesitate to make known my change of mind regardless of the ridicule and disapproval and even insinuations of being vacillating in my views, or a "turncoat" when pressure is brought to bear.





The tragic suicide of young Milton Lubell, 22, last night is in my opinion, to be traced entirely to the failure of our middle class Jews to achieve either an economic or a spiritual adjustment to their American environment. I attribute his suicide primarily to his wanting to marry the girl he loved, but having to begin to train for a calling he detested - the law - because there was nothing he could count on to make a living from. The fact that he was a Jew circumscribed his chances to the very minimum. If he were a Gentile he would have been a top notcher before long, because he undoubtedly possessed more than the average type of ability for a college graduate. If this economic maladjustment from which we Jews suffer had in any way been compensated by an "abundant" Jewish life, one rich in creative and spiritual values a young man like Lubell would have had sufficient stamina to overcome the economic handicap due to his being a Jew. This was the thought <sup>I</sup> ~~it~~ tried to drive home in my sermon last Yom Kippur night. The people ~~have~~ "enjoyed" listening to the sermon. That is as far as it seems destined to go. Will our people ever be sufficiently aroused over their ~~unhappy~~ unhappy condition to do something about it, or will they perish in their blindness and inactivity?

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Thursday, October 9, 1930

I am not satisfied with what I have to say in the chapter in which I try to point out that Judaism is a civilization. After all, the entire argument hinges upon that point and unless the reader can be made to appreciate this point and all that it implies he is not likely to be convinced. I must therefore rake up the entire problem of civilizations vs. civilization.

The possibility of fitting Judaism into the framework of the modern social order, or as it has been designated, the Great Society, is contingent upon our conceiving Judaism in a manner that is in keeping



both with the nature of its own being and with the temper of the age. If we decide to conceive Judaism as a religion we might meet the requirement of keeping it true to the nature of its own being, provided we are prepared to accept it as supernatural revelation, but then we would be flouting the temper of the age. If we choose deliberately to change its original character and reduce it to an ethical monotheism we might bring it in line with the temper of the age, but it would have to be done at the expense of what we term the nature of its being. For there is so much in its being that lies outside of the domain of ethical monotheism. Hence our task is to discover a proper working category, that might enable Judaism to be so conceived as to comply with the two conditions which have here been indicated.

We believe that by placing Judaism within the category of civilization we shall know how to manipulate it for the purpose of fitting ~~fitting~~ it into the framework of the modern social order. Before we can proceed to prove this point it is necessary to have a succinct notion of what is meant by a civilization. That notion should help us identify in the complex thing called Judaism the elements and characteristics which go to make up its substance and which because they spring directly from the laws of human nature in social environment can be properly appraised in terms of the present age.

The progress in dealing with concrete situations has been due to the invention of workable concepts. Concepts are usually treated as passive generalizations of particular events or things. In reality they are tools of thought ~~invented~~ invented by the mind for so manipulating things or events in ideas as to be able to manipulate them in fact. The concept of phlogiston was once a thought tool invented to help one think properly of combustion. It turned out to be entirely unfitted to help us understand or manipulate the act of combustion.





Instead we use the thought tool or the concept oxidation. The situation in Jewish life is so complicated that we have to invent a new thought tool or modify an old one to new uses if we want to be in a position to deal effectively with it. This procedure is itself an unwanted one in the life of any people. If we want to get ourselves understood we use the vocabulary and concepts familiar to those to whom we address ourselves. That is why Philo and Josephus found it necessary to represent Judaism to the Gentiles of their day as a philosophy and this why most of us deem it necessary to represent Judaism to the non-Jewish world as a religion. But unfortunately this concept is a misfit and the non-Jews themselves have not had occasion to invent in the course of their social and spiritual vicissitudes the thought tool that fits our case accurately. We therefore have to do the inventing ourselves.

The inventing this time does not involve creating a completely new concept as has often to be done in science, but remodelling a very much used concept. That concept is civilization. As it stands that concept is applied to the accumulation of knowledge, skills, tools, arts, literatures, laws, religions and philosophies that stands between man and external nature that would otherwise destroy him in a few months. So conceived that concept is of no help whatever. But if we contemplate that accumulation in its actual functioning we realize <sup>at</sup> ~~xx~~ once that it does not function as a whole but in blocks. Each block of that accumulation is a civilization. It is sharply differentiated from every other. Unlike man who would be practically helpless without any civilization, each block of civilization can exist and flourish even if every other should become extinct. This fact indicates that a civilization is a somewhat complete and self-contained entity. Moreover, we discover that in actuality civilization is an algebraic term. The actuality is civilization in the plural.



Friday, October 10, 1930

I have to deliver an address at the dedication exercises of the Teachers Institute on Sunday, October 19. In view of the fact that I have to teach this year at the Seminary the technique of preaching I want to take note of the mental process involved in working up an address. I suppose the more I go about it in artisan fashion the more specific will be the advice I will be able to give to the students. So here it is.

The first question I asked myself was "What use shall I make of the occasion?" and the answer which was not long in coming was "To arouse the Jewish community from its apathy to the problem of Jewish education." There immediately began to crowd in thoughts bearing on the spiritual chaos. I felt that I must direct my thinking by further ~~man~~ questioning. "Wherein ~~my~~ may the fact that we have a building devoted to the training of Jewish teachers help to bring some order out of that chaos?" I realize that I might confine my remarks to the effect of such a building on the students themselves. It is certain to provide atmosphere which is necessary to education as air is to the lungs. It is bound to give the students a feeling that Jewish education holds a place in the spiritual life of the general community. The present location of the TI is a symbol as well as a convenience. But in view of the rarity of public occasions for the discussion from a communal standpoint of the status and needs of Jewish education, it is essential that we turn to the broader aspects of the dedication of the building.

There came to my mind the idea that the ~~man~~ <sup>mere</sup> presence of an instrument creates its uses. Most of our evils are due to the existence of instruments that simply have to be used whether what they produce is superfluous or harmful. Knowing this fact we ought to take advantage of it and create instruments that are productive of higher values.





Jewish institutions of learning, religion, social service are Jewish territory. The mere existence of the building is a ~~good~~ guarantee of its functioning and so long as it will function we cannot despair of a Jewish future.

As I was writing out the first line of the foregoing paragraph it occurred to me that what I was about to say pointed both to the least and to the most significant advantage to be derived from the building. That use implied passivity on the part of the public. Hence the addition of the word "mere" before "presence of an instrument etc." In the address this very "mereness" of the advantage described in the foregoing paragraph should be used as a means of transition to the next point.

What exactly is to be the next point? In order to get at it I dwell further upon the inadequacy of relying upon the mere ~~presence~~ presence of the building to guarantee a Jewish future. In fact there is too much of that kind of reliance as it is. There is something of a building craze. At this point there comes to mind the saying p.66

where builders are glorified. Builders and not buildings. I ask myself what specific interpretation shall I give to the term builders? Who builds Jewish life? He who experiences Jewish needs and looks for ways of meeting them, cherishes Jewish ideals and translates them into action.

I now feel like a river that has arrived at a region of flats. What became of that impetuous rush with which I leaped down from my standing point? I must crawl along till I shall encounter another considerable incline. Wasn't my purpose to stir the public into a vital interest in Jewish education? So far I have <sup>on</sup> my hands merely a good metaphor. My problem is how to have that metaphor strike fire.

Along comes the idea that the Jew is precluded from an attitude of benevolent neutrality to Judaism. If he is not a builder he is a destroyer. Now I am stuck.



All of the foregoing material for the address I have been writing out in Central Park sitting on a bench facing the sun which is almost as warm as on a midsummer day. When my ideas gave out I took to reading the article in this week's Nation by Benjamin Slothberg on the Degradation of American Psychology. I just reveled to see him rout that whole gang of pseudo-scientists who presume to measure mind at the very same time that they deny its existence. The special object of my contempt just now is that vulgarian Walter B. Pitkin whose book on the psychology of happiness I have been reading lately; also his little book on How to Read. Slothberg mops the floor with him, to the delight of my soul.

But the trouble with Slothberg is that he only points out what's wrong. Why doesn't he indicate what kind of psychology we do need? Why doesn't he say that we need a psychology based on faith in the inherent worth of life and of the human being? But that is really asking too much.

This ought to give me a clue to what constitutes building Jewish life -- but so far (ten hours later) it hasn't.

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Tomorrow morning we have a bar mizvah celebration at the services. It seems that the innovation of addressing the parents instead of the boy makes it harder for me to find what to say. Or perhaps I only imagine that it will be harder. As a matter of fact it ought to be easier to talk to older people than to a young boy who is too frightened to pay much attention to what is being said to him.

The parents should be given to understand that their responsibility for the Jewish upbringing of their boy is not to be relaxed one whit. On the contrary it is augmented. They must become his companions, they must themselves be convinced of the value and beauty of Jewish life, so that by urging him to take up its study and practice





they will have the feeling that they are helping him toward self-fulfilment and the attainment of serenity. We never learn so well as when we teach. They themselves are certain to get more out of life if they will concern themselves with their boy's character and happiness. Their main task will consist in making their boy feel keenly that they themselves hold in highest esteem the finer things of life, that they prize moral cleanness, self-respect, the sense of loyalty and responsibility above wealth and power. It isn't enough merely to accept these values tacitly but to articulate them every time the boy comes to make a choice.

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Sunday, October 12, 1930

This has been quite a full day for me. In the morning I dictated the outline for the Shemini Ezeret sermon on "The Meaning of Worship" after having worked on it with Leon Hurwitz, Signer and Jacob Grossman for about three hours last night. I like the idea on which it is based and it promises to turn out a good sermon. Then I read Hebrew for about 3/4 of an hour to get into a Hebrew frame of mind for my work at the Institute. I found no difficulty in teaching for three and a half hours in succession. I am greatly buoyed up by the feeling of at homeness in the new TI building. I experienced a novel and thrilling sensation when I walked over from the TI building to the old Seminary building by way of the colonnade walk. I felt for the first time the way a professor at one of the universities must feel, a sense of belonging and that to an academic institution that moulds lives of young people. But I was not destined to enjoy this feeling very long. For when I heard Abraham Malkin who had returned last week from Palestine after a summer's stay there I felt as though I ought to take up the wandering ~~wandering~~ staff again. He emphasized the point that any Jew who really believed in Zionism must tear up his stakes and migrate to Palestine.



I am glad I have formulated my conception of Judaism as a civilization. I feel that it is a satisfactory answer to the extremists who insist that Jews must give up all hopes of any kind of Jewish life outside of Palestine. The answer I try to give in the book is that if we really had enough energy to betake ourselves to Palestine, we could use that energy to work out a satisfactory modus vivendi as a Diaspora Nation with Palestine merely as the center. I proceeded to act on this theory right after I was through teaching, for I meet a committee of the students and suggested to them to work out a kind of model minha service to be conducted during the recess interval. I was happy to find myself using a good and fluent Hebrew and conveying concrete and helpful suggestions as to how they should go about their task and that without having devoted any time to thinking out the matter beforehand.

On my way home to which I can now walk after I am through teaching, I hit upon an excellent idea to give point to my talk next Sunday. The idea is that the Jews of this country must adopt a clear and courageous fiscal policy as to the amount they are going to spend on Jewish education. Federations, congregations and all institutions that are supposed to upbuild Jewish life must give Jewish education first place in their budget and allow it a liberal share of the budget. Rabbis as well as laymen must adopt a new conception of what Jewish education must cost the community. If there is any meaning to our upholding traditional Judaism it is that we believe in giving to the training of the young the same place and will spend for it relatively the same share of our resources as those who have kept Judaism alive in the past, etc. etc.

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As soon as I got through with supper I spent an hour with Gelb, one of the Seminary students, helping him select a subject for his sermon.





He came with a text that was incongruous with the subject he chose and he chose a subject that he knew nothing about. Having been told by some of his fellow students that his choice of text and subject was ~~in~~ good I had to labor to talk him out of it, and to urge him to take another subject. Incidentally he told me about Levinthal's type of sermonizing which he characterized as the very antithesis of mine. The fact that Levinthal is successful in holding his position deludes many of the Seminary men who hear him often into believing that Levinthal's method must be the right one, though they themselves realize that they learn nothing of value from it.

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As soon as I got through with Gelb I went with Lena to pay a condolence call on the L<sub>o</sub>bell's whose son Milton committed suicide last week. The mother had asked for me; she imagined, I suppose, I could bring her some consolatory message. What could I say, except that I shared her grief, and that she should derive some comfort at least from the thought that Milton left her a lovable memory. Milton undoubtedly was a highly gifted lad and in addition he loved his parents with a love that is unusual these days among our young people. Of course his father's financial troubles no doubt had a depressing effect on him. But how in the world could one who was so intelligent and so good commit an act which he surely had imagination enough to realize could have nothing less than a murderous effect on his poor father and mother? I have never heard of such a sudden fit of insanity as must have seized him to commit such a crime, for in his case it was nothing less than a crime.

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Monday, October 13, 1930

In assigning the honors p.69 and Joe Levy gave to the younger man and to the older man. I had once called his attention to the proper ranking of these honors, but he seems to have forgotten what I had told him. I reminded him again but it was too late to correct the mistake he made. As usual in such cases he rationalized his procedure by saying that it is much better that the element of rank be eliminated from these honors. I could not help but agree with him, but this incident only shows how hard it is to live down tradition. What then can I expect of people who live unreflectively?

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Monday, October 20, 1930

Last Thursday night I enjoyed an hour or so that that serenity which I experience so seldom. The fact that I had completed the address I was to deliver at the dedication exercises in less time than I had expected, and that it turned out quite satisfactory produced in me a state of self-conscious happiness. It was especially while returning from the Institute in the evening after having visited Chertoff's class and indulged in an analysis of the question that I was in an exalted frame of mind. As I was walking through Central Park West I thought I caught the secret of happiness as being that of carrying out what you undertake, hence, if you want to be happy first make sure of what it is within your power to achieve and work away at that.

Measured by that criterion I ought to be quite happy these days, because I have experienced the joy of carrying out a number of smaller tasks and have participated in an occasion which marks the attainment of a long cherished hope. The occasion is the dedication of the new Institute building for which I have been yearning the last





twenty-one years. In the address I delivered yesterday I managed to express the hurt and humiliation I had suffered all those years, without shocking overmuch the delicate sensibilities of Cyrus Adler. Not that I was spared even on this occasion reason for feeling that to our Jewish aristocracy Jewish education is totally useless and meaningless. After having set the date of the dedication exercises months ahead Federation could not find any other night to make its appeal than the one we had chosen. If our own people -- I mean Adler and the Trustees-- had cared more for Jewish education than they do they would have found a way to avoid this conflict. If only the Dedication Committee had been summoned to consider what should be done, we might have found a way of combining the dedication of the Library which took place in the afternoon, with the dedication of the Institute. But Adler took it upon himself to decide that the program should remain unchanged.

Anyhow, our affair turned out much better than I had expected. Although we missed the aristocracy -- from whom all I look for is financial support -- we had a larger attendance at the Institute dedication than at the Library dedication. My address made a hit and the rest of the program was interesting and went off without a hitch.

The lesser occasions which should have made me happy have been the three other talks I have given the last few days, which in spite of my pre-occupation with the dedication came off very well. On Saturday morning I preached on the significance of Jewish Folklore; in the afternoon I made a neat little speech about the meaning of  
p.70 and tonight I addressed the Israel Friedlaender classes in our new auditorium for the first time. Adler and his wife were there, and I spoke extemporaneously. Withal that it was a neat and finished little talk.



And yet I am not happy. The news about Weizmann's resignation and ~~the~~ attitude of the British government added to all that the Jews are suffering in Germany on account of the growing ~~power~~ power of the Hitlerites has broken my spirit. That saying of Tacitus I have written on the fly leaf of this book describes my present state of mind once again. As we were leaving the auditorium where the assembly had taken place the conversation between the Adlers and myself naturally turned upon the resignation of Weizmann. Mrs. Adler remarked: "This work you are doing here is more important," referring to the work with the young people. I reminded her, however, that without Palestine we would lack the content with which to attract the young, as the program of the evening had shown. That's something these Jews of the Adler type haven't yet learned to understand.

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Oh, yes, I forgot all about the great "honor" that was conferred upon me last night when Adler, in introducing me, informed the audience that the Board of Trustees had offered me and that I had accepted the honor of henceforth being designated as Dean instead of Principal. What a joke! I have an idea that the consent of the Board meant the whispered conversation that Adler had with Unterberg in the lobby of the old Seminary building while we were getting in line for the procession to the large tent in the quadrangle where the Dedication exercises were to take place. It was right then and there also that Adler called me aside and asked me whether I would accept the title Dean. So that's that.

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Monday, November 3, 1930

I wish I knew how to ward off the fits of depression that sap my strength. I can't make out whether the cause is a physical one and the psychic state the effect or vice versa. Everytime I live





I live through these fits life appears to me stale and worthless and Nirvana the only true bliss. Here is what happened to me before yesterday. I had worked out a sermon on the subject "Great Britain, Another Broken Reed," dealing with the question as to the effect of the Passfield statement on our hopes for a Jewish national home. When I got up in the morning the first thing to greet me was a letter from Adler including the reports of the two readers on my translation of the Mesillat. The names of the readers were not given, but I knew that one of the readers was Davidson, and I easily identified the second report as coming from Jacob Kohn. I was irritated by his patronizing air of authority. He certainly made it a point to read every sentence meticulously and to discover every possible flaw. Nevertheless he could not help praising my introduction on the very ground for which Davidson found fault with it. Davidson didn't seem to understand my introduction. It was evidently too much for him. His main criticism was the spelling of Mesillat with one "l".

Although I was naturally annoyed at getting back the material after having been out of my hands for over two years, I could have borne the annoyance had not the meager attendance at the services added to it. The few that appeared came straggling just before I had to deliver the sermon. During the reading I wanted to find the verse in which Egypt is referred to as a broken reed. I knew it was in the thirties in Isaiah, but I was of the impression that it was Isaiah himself had so characterized Egypt. It took me quite a while to locate the passage. This brought home to me the poor way in which my memory serves me, a failing to which I owe my lack of fluency in speaking, my enforced reserve, and my inability to recall stories necessary to enliven conversation. On top of that came the tardy arrival of my own children at synagogue and my forgetting to give proper directions as I was about to read a number of verses bearing



on the subject of my address. All in all when I stepped into the pulpit all the vigor had gone out of my soul and I simply read off lifelessly the notes before me, which not having been intended for reading were bare and crude stylistically.

When the services were over I retired into the little room back of the synagogue and picked up the Menorah Journal of March, 1930. I read the letter from Pland by Neumann. That finished me. Even though I had no right to permit my own frustrations to get the better of me, yet how could I be calm when so many millions of my people are doomed to pass the rest of their days in a hell that is more cruel than any that imagination could conceive? It isn't only what they suffer but the fact that no one seems to know or to care about that is enough to drive any one insane. What on earth is the American Jewish Committee or the Congress doing to prevent such ghastly crimes? Where are our spokesmen? Why don't they appeal to the conscience of mankind? And here am I helpless because tongue tied. The little energy I have is taken up with the routine work of teaching.

Frustration, futility and ebbing powers of mind -- these are the terrors that beset me in these dreadful hours and often days of depression. Finkelstein said to me the other day that some one had remarked to him that mine was the saddest Jewish face he had ever seen. The fact is I can seldom forget the sinister realities of life in genral and the hopeless predicament of the Jews in particular. Probably if I had seen the least sign of promise in the work I myself do or the least response to my efforts, I might have been too complacent to be so sensitive to the evils in the world at large. In any case, I am no doubt a good subject for a psychiatrist though I doubt whether any of that tribe could help me.

Perhaps a psychiatrist might be helped in his diagnosis if

I were to inform him that I was bored tonight as I listened to Aristophane's Lysistrata with its slapstick on the delights of cohabitation.





Friday, November 7, 1930

I was for a long time under the spell of J. D. Eisenstein's argument in favor of Kol Nidre. But with every statement in defense of Kol Nidre that I have had occasion to read recently my former attitude not only awakened but became more confirmed. Adler in the Mahzor, Davidson in the Jewish Year Book (5684), Greenstone in his "The Jewish Religion" do not give the least intimation of any such rendering as that suggested by Eisenstein. It is evident that it was never with this rendering in mind that the mass of Jews ever recited the Kol Nidre. The irrational attachment to it has all the earmarks of the kind of devotion that primitives entertain toward a fetish. One of the outstanding characteristics of Jewish religion is its abhorrence of fetishes. This is shown in the story of Hezekiah's shattering the brazen serpent (cf. the use made of that story by R. Judah the prince) and of Jeremiah's condemnation of the ark in the Temple.

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Sunday, November 9, 1930

I put in a good day's work today. In the morning I read for two hours English poetry and the Hebrew introduction to the commentary by Gordon on the Psalms. I taught five periods, corrected the reports handed me by Dinin and Chipkin and attended for the first time a meeting of the Jewish Teachers Association at the Institute Building. I was very much upset during the period I taught the Senior class of the Institute on account of the lackadaisical attitude of the students and their inability to grasp the subject matter I was giving them. Probably they would have made more progress and I would have had my burden lightened if I had been able to put into their hands the proper kind of text book or if I myself had worked out such a text book. But as it is I find the teaching at the Institute a great strain.



I surprised myself by talking extemporaneously in Hebrew at the meeting of the teachers though I could have talked in English without any feeling of embarrassment since the meeting was otherwise conducted in English. But I was determined to give myself an opportunity to practice speaking at meetings without previous preparation in order to acquire self-confidence in the use of the Hebrew. I simply spoke what came to my mind and for almost half an hour I held the attention of those present without having hesitated any more than I would if I had spoken in English.

When I came home I worked out the outline of the sermon I gave yesterday at the SAJ synagogue on the subject of Social Climbing. While I spoke with something of the usual verve I was not able to draw on as wide a range of vocabulary as the nature of the ideas and facts called for. I cannot understand why such words as "cringe" and "overbearing" failed me at the moment that I needed them, just as the term "brief case" escapes me when I want to refer to the leather bag in which I carry my books. If I could only break through those inhibitions that often beset me most when the outline of my talk is fullest I would probably do well. I know that if I take the trouble to assimilate the substance of the sermon I can speak quite fluently and use effective diction but I begrudge the time spent in such ~~an~~ effort. I much prefer to use that time in reading or studying.

One thing is certain, I do not dawdle as much as I used to in former years. I have grown to be a miser in my time. I work to the limit of my capacity and yet I do not seem to be making much headway. Perhaps at some future time some one will discover a means of rendering the memory more retentive, something to fortify the gland that aid the power of memory. In the meantime, we whose memories are leaky have to keep on forever replenishing them without hope of ever increasing the mass of knowledge we need to carry out some of our intellectual or social enterprises.





Wednesday, November 12, 1930

No one, I dare say, could accuse me of not taking good care of myself. Realizing that my spiritual outfit is only of mediocre capacity I knew that I have to be a healthy animal as a prerequisite to being a passable sort of fellow. If what they say about Wilson having forever suffered from headaches and indigestion is true, his career might not have been cut short in its prime had he been in the habit, as I am of taking a teaspoon of cascara daily before going to bed instead of drug-ging himself with headache powders. I know all this sounds ridiculous, but it is strange what a change in one's Weltanschauung a teaspoon of cascara can effect.

So here is what I have done today to give that animal of mine a chance to thrive. I rose at 9:00 after a sound sleep of six and a half hours, took my daily cold shower (something I have practically never missed the last twenty years) and had breakfast consisting of orange juice, one egg, a cup of coffee and two rolls. I had to be at the Seminary at 10:50. Instead of taking either the subway or taxi I walked the distance which is two full miles in about 36 minutes. I then taught almost continuously till 1:20. The Midrash and Homiletics <sup>went</sup> hours ~~xxx~~ off snappily. The men were delighted with the outlines of the sermons. I gave them, both the oral one on Imperialism and the written one on Social Climbing. Miss May then brought me the 64th Report of the work of the Teachers Institute on which I spent <sup>25</sup> ~~xx~~ minutes making corrections and then I marched home again. The lunch I found at home was the ideal one for the appetite I had worked up on the walk, oatmeal porridge prepared at my suggestion, asparagus tips on toast in an ocean of cream sauce and a cup of coffee with the dried crumbs of chocolate cake.

As I sat alone and ate the lunch I said to myself, "This is a fair quid pro quo." I gave the world three hours of homiletics and the world gave me back a nourishing lunch. I can never cease marveling



at the miracle of exchange of goods and services. Not all the Ten Plagues of Egypt with the dividing of the Red Sea thrown into the bargain can compare in marvelousness with the miracle of exchange that makes it possible for me to get asparagus on toast in exchange for the homiletic interpretation of a few paragraphs of Leviticus Rabba. It is for this marvel of marvels that I thank God whenever I say grace, and I say it quite often with cap on or without a cap.

At three I lay down to take a nap. I woke up at 3:25. I had to be at the dentist's at 4:00. I thought I would just rest another little while, but before I knew it I dozed off and when I woke it was 4:05. I made a dash for my shoes, collar and tie and managed to plant myself in the dentist's chair, five blocks away from where I live, at 4:15. This appointment with the dentist was for the purpose of filling a cavity which I had discovered in one of my teeth the night before.

I think I have justified my claim that I take good care of my animal.

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Wednesday, November 26, 1930

The very next day after I congratulated ~~myself~~ myself on my good health I caught a cold which put me out of commission for a few days. I did not preach on Saturday a week ago and absented myself from the Teachers Institute the Sunday following on that account.

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Last Friday night I preached at Jacob Kohn's synagogue the sermon on "The Ways of Imperialism" (The Hypocrisy of Empires). Someone happened to remark after the sermon "This ought to reach ~~Macdonald~~ Macdonald." "Of Course Macdonald would take to heart the Midrashic interpretation of a text from the Psalms (p.76 )" was Kohn's reply. This is the typical Schoeterian attitude that has been bred into Kohn's bones. If the sermon is to be taken so sneeringly, then why preach?





Last Sunday, the first and, for the time being, last attempt at having a new type of religious service in the Teachers Institute was made. I spoke in Hebrew on the function of prayer. I felt that the entire attempt ran against the grain of the members of the teaching staff. They were out of sympathy with the purpose and spirit of the exercises. This upset me and I made one of those grand failures that leave a permanent scar in my soul. But this was not the worst of the performance. One part of the program consisted of the recital of Psalm 42. The girl who recited it gave herself such dramatic airs that the beauty of the Psalm was lost and the spirit of the service defeated. After the service was over Morris Levine began to carry on against the recital of the Psalm, as though some one had tampered with something that was his personal property. He teaches the ~~Rut~~ Psalms and so imagines, I suppose, that no one dare spoil them, because they are entirely his. Being on edge as a result of the attitude of the teachers I felt particularly resentful of Levine's outbreak as though nothing mattered but the manner in which the Psalm was recited. I retorted sharply and with that the quarrel ended.

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Benderly learned from Wachman that I had complained against him that he was duplicating the work of the Teachers Institute. Wachman got his information from Unterberg who in turn had been informed by Dr. Adler. Benderly came to see me last Monday and after a three hour conversation we came to an understanding which I hope will put an end to the bickering on the part of the Teachers Institute Staff against what Benderly is doing with the young people whom he is training. I regret that I shared their grievance against Benderly and reported it to Dr. Adler. I am appending the letter which Benderly wrote me at my suggestion, and the letter which I have just dictated to Dr. Adler.



Thursday, December 11, 1930

The sermon on "Parable of a Nation that Forgot its Past" which I delivered a week ago last Saturday, and the one on "Why Religion Is Necessary" delivered last Saturday were very successful. I ascribe the success of the first one to my having based it on the story of the play Siegfried and the success of the second to my having connected it with Einstein's article which appeared recently in the magazine section of the N.Y. Times on Science and Religion. I doubt whether I could have managed to discuss the conception of God from the pulpit, if it had not become the subject of controversy in the press as a result of that article. On the other hand, I suspect that there was not a single person in the audience who really got the full implications of the idea that religion is now entering upon a third stage in its development by becoming cosmic. Anyhow Einstein has rendered us poor preachers a good turn by helping us put across a new idea in religion, something we could never have done ourselves. In playing this role he makes me think of Jacob easily rolling away from the well the huge stone which it required the entire gang of shepherds to remove.

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An outcome of my ironic mood is the peaceful settlement which I believe I have finally arrived at in the Kol Nidre controversy. Last Saturday afternoon a committee of the SAJ headed by A. Rosenblatt and consisting of Semel, Jacob Levy, Schwartz, Segal, Thompson and Bromberg came to discuss the question of reintroducing the Kol Nidre. This committee was formed in accordance with my suggestion that the time to discuss the question was during the year and not immediately before Yom Kippur. Fortunately I had given the matter considerable thought. J. D. Eisenstein's interpretation of the Kol Nidre seemed plausible, but to restore the Kol Nidre as it is and merely add a rubric would have placed me in the peculiar position of not having thought of that interpretation





in all the years that I am supposed to have studied the question, and would be taken as implying that I was merely yielding to pressure. A few weeks ago as I was about to fall asleep the idea occurred to me that the most sensible solution would be to insert into the text of Kol Nidre words to the effect that all vows, etc. uttered in anger or undue provocation intended as punishment or revenge, these and only these vows should be null and void.

When I told this to the committee they felt very happy about it. The only man who persisted in asking that the text be left intact was Jacob Levy. Again he recited instances of the people in his acquaintance to whom Kol Nidre was one of the most sacred and solemn institutions in Judaism. He quoted the Grand Street Bosy of whom he was one. I wish I had the literary gift to portray that gang. <sup>Haunch</sup> ~~Haunch~~, Paunch and Jowl describes some of those "boys."

This time the other members of the committee sided with me and spared me the trouble of arguing with him. Semel and Rosenblatt finally squelched him.

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The task of beating into shape the substance of the book on Judaism as a Civilization is not only taking up all of my spare time, but making me feel how deficient I am in the mental qualities necessary to clear and effective writing. There is no end to the number of times I have to rewrite a passage before it expresses what I have in mind. There are many factors which contribute to the difficulties I experience in writing. When I came to this country I was eight years old and began to attend public school at eleven. The schools I attended - both elementary and higher - did absolutely nothing for me in the way of teaching me to write or to speak. I was never trained or required to read English literature. These facts plus the lack of any native gift for language account for the ~~immense~~ tremendous effort I have to put forth to express myself clearly. As to being eloquent or being able to roll off



platitudes in profuse and magnificent style - an art so essential to successful preaching and making speeches at banquets -- that is out of the question. Realizing all this I am not apt to be in a very cheerful mood. I am therefore grateful to Bertrand Russel for having written his latest book on The Conquest of Happiness which I have been reading today. It has done for me what the Ethical greaties used to do at one time for the pious Jew. It made me realize that I ought to be ashamed of myself for not being happy. It has opened my eyes to those unethical traits in myself which stand in the way of my happiness, and to the advantages which I enjoy and which ought to banish from my mind all thoughts that mar my happiness.

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In common with everybody who invested in stocks, Lena and I have suffered our quota of financial losses. We did not speculate on margin and we invested in bank stock which we had been assured was the safest of all stocks. As we stand today we have lost not only the twenty or twenty-five thousand dollars of paper profit we had made before the crash but an equal amount of actual hard earned cash which we had invested. Today the U.S. Bank of which stock we have ten shares closed down. The shares cost us \$2080. That we are bearing our losses with equanimity is probably due more to the realization that there are thousands of people who are infinitely worse off than we rather than to any native or acquired ability to remain unperturbed.

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Friday, December 19, 1930

Last Sunday night I attended the Hanukkah dinner which the Seminary students gave themselves and the faculty. Harold Goldfarb, who had charge of the arrangements, had asked me to speak but I declined because of my general reluctance to deliver any speeches with my colleagues around. He had therefore asked Ginzberg to speak. The





first part of Ginzberg's remarks consisted of some of his jokes which I have now heard for the tenth time. Then he launched forth into an attack against me without of course mentioning my name. "I have occasion," he said, "to study the Book of Maccabees of late, and I have discovered that we have been all wrong in condemning the Hellenists. The Hellenists were the Jews who believed that Judaism was a civilization. But the Jews who were loyal to their faith resisted the efforts of the Hellenists to make of Judaism merely a civilization."

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January 15, 1931

I have refrained from making any entries into the Journal because I have felt that I ought not to permit myself to be diverted from the work on the book on Judaism as a civilization. Despite all my efforts to devote every moment of time and every bit of energy at my disposal to the one object of finishing the book I seem to be making little headway. Worst of all I have struck a snag and I find it hard to extricate myself. The part dealing with the place of religion in Judaism as a civilization is giving me great concern. The part I worked on during the last summer is out of joint with the rest of the material and I have neither the time nor the patience to write new material. The last ten days I have been very much under the weather as a result of an attack of grip. All in all I feel horribly demoralized and frustrated.

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After all the years of thinking on the problem of religion I am still at a loss how to convert the conclusions I hold with the actual situation in which we find ourselves. I know very well what I mean by God. God to me is the process that makes for creativity, integration, love and justice. The function of prayer is to render us conscious of that process. I can react with a sense of holiness or momentousness to



to existence because it is continually being worked upon by this divine process. I am not troubled in the least by the fact that God is not an identifiable being; for that matter neither is my Ego an identifiable being. Nor am I troubled by the fact that God is not perfect. He would have to be static to be perfect. Nothing dynamic can be perfect since to be dynamic implies to be in the state of becoming.

But how shall I relate all these ideas to the problem of Jewish religion?

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Rabbi A. H. Silver's book described the advertiser as "probably the most significant religious book of the decade" is irritatingly vague and evasive. Books of that kind only obscure the issue and make it all the harder to get the average person to think intelligently on the subject of religion. After reading that kind of "blah" it was a joy to read the article on "Religion in John Dewey's Philosophy" by Wieman in the January number of the Journal of Religion.

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Saturday night, January 24, 1931

Last Sunday I read and interpreted Andreiv's Anathema at the "lecture supper dance" given by the SAJ at the Commodore.

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Today I officiated at a wedding where the young lady was a divorcee and the young man a "Kohen." I am glad I had the courage to break with the traditional law on that point.

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Last Wednesday morning I had yahrzeit after father and I prayed before the "Amud" and I put on the Tefilin after not having had them on for quite a number of months. I cannot say I am spiritually adjusted even on these minor matters. Every time I recite on Sabbaths the





passages at the end of the Shema I am troubled in my mind whether I am doing the right thing in not keeping up the practice of putting on the tefilin daily.

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A man by the name of Joseph Monsky moved down recently from Washington Heights to this section of the city and began to attend the services at the SAJ House. When he introduced himself to me I recognized his name as one that is mentioned quite frequently in connection with Jewish activities and I therefore made it my business to write to him inviting him to join the SAJ. The fact that he sent his child to our school and that he was anxious to have his child receive more hours of tuition than we at present have facilities for led me to believe that his accession would be an asset. We need people who are inclined to ask for more rather than for less Jewishness.

Instead of filling out the membership application blank which I sent together with the invitation I received a reply from him in which he said he wanted some questions answered. I thought that he wanted to inform himself about my attitude to Orthodoxy, because I inferred from the fact that he had been treasurer of Drob's congregation that he must be quite Orthodox. Accordingly when he came yesterday I explained to him quite at length what my views were. Although he started out by saying that he was brought up strictly Orthodox and that he thought the seating of men and women together abominable, it turned out that what troubled him was not our departure from Orthodoxy, but our financial status. He seems to suspect that we must be as hard up as the Center and that we would at once turn to him for assistance. I referred him to the chairman Klein.

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Thursday, February 5, 1931

Yesterday at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly which I attended for the first time this year, Finkelstein brought up the question of what can be done to have the laymen of the congregations affiliated with the United Synagogue display some interest in the cause of Conservative Judaism. What prompted him to bring up that question was the contrast between the successful convention of the Union of Hebrew Congregations held recently at Philadelphia and the dismal affairs which are meant to pass for conventions of the United Synagogue. His idea was that the Seminary ought to be made the object of a project for Conservative Jewry to work on. I, for one, couldn't see how the Seminary with its inflexible organization could fall in with such a project. I then held forth on what I believed would be the kind of project that would fire the imagination of those who are at present dissatisfied both with the Orthodox and the Reformist programs. I suggested that we call into a being an organization that would be representative of all aspects of Jewish life, religion, social work, education, creative endeavor. I spoke quite freely and warmly on the subject. The discussion was participated in by the few present. Israel Goldstein, Finkelstein, Israel Levinthal, Morris D. Levine, the younger Alstat and Landesman. I hardly believe I won them over to my way of thinking, but I believe I made a dent in some of their preconceived notions.

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A most unexpected conference was the one I took part in today. Rabbi James Heller of Cincinnati was instrumental in calling it. The following attended: Stephen Wise, Solomon Goldman, James Heller, Louis I. Newman, Barnett Brickner and I. It took place at the study of Louis I. Newman in his Temple house on 83 Street. The discussion was on a high plane and led to the conclusion that we should try to work out a philosophy of Jewish life in America. I promised to submit my book which





is nearing conclusion, and the others are to prepare papers on different phases of such a philosophy.

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Thursday, February 12, 1931

For the first time in the history of the Teachers Institute I invited Dr. Benderly to a meeting of the faculty. The specific matter he presented was how to increase the number of men who want to take up teaching in Jewish schools. The discussion which lasted four hours developed into a discussion of some of the fundamental problems of Jewish education. Benderly showed himself not only master of the argument but an able pleader for Jewish life and a genuine idealist. I withdraw all remarks recorded in this journal that imply the slightest aspersion on his character and resume my ardent love and admiration of him.

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Tuesday, March 31, 1931

This evening at 6:00 I sent to Benderly two copies of the book I have been working on for the last few years. Today was the last day set by the committee on the Rosenwald Prize for sending in manuscripts. I could have availed myself of the two weeks of grace extended to some of the other competitors, but I preferred to finish the book within the time originally fixed. Being very doubtful of my actually winning the prize, I want to derive whatever satisfaction I can from the work itself and there is little I value as much as the sense of having completed a task that I had undertaken. In the joy of accomplished purpose I thank God for having enabled me to bring together my ideas in organized fashion, for giving me the patience to set them forth in fairly readable form and to attend, despite my poor health during the last few months, to such mechanical details as notes and bibliography.

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Friday, April 10, 1931

I am mentally and physically tired after the strain of delivering five sermons within eight days. As far as I can see, the only good resulting from the sermon is that it brings Jews together for worship, thereby keeping alive their Jewish consciousness. It is immaterial what I preach. There does not seem to be any relation between the ideas expressed in the course of a sermon and any tangible or visible action on the part of the listeners. In fact the very multitude of ideas with which the listeners are bombarded during such a barrage of sermons prevents any of them from being ~~acted~~ acted on. It is not without some effort that I myself recall the sermon before the last one. The main requisite of a sermon is that it ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ should hold the attention of the hearers while it is delivered. Its function is mainly to enable those who come to synagogue to while away their time with the minimum degree of boredom. If a cantor and choir could keep the people interested there would be no need for sermons. This use of religious and ethical ideas as a means of helping people to while away their time falls under the category of (p.84).

The preachers are unmindful of the sterility with which such work is cursed; they prefer to act in accordance with the advice which cynics read into the dictum .

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To my shame and regret I am reading only for the first time the Brothers Karamazov. It is a veritable encyclopedia of problems dealing with society and the individual. How clearly and succinctly Dostovestsky states what I have been long struggling to express in reference to the relation between church and State! (cf. Book II, Ch. 5).

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Friday, April 17, 1931

What we admire in the young child and miss in the adult is singleness of personality. Multiple personality is the product of civilization. When the New Testament associates the Kingdom of God with the child it knows whereof it speaks, for it is only when civilization will attain that development which will enable the multiple personality of the individual to become completely integrated and fused into singleness that the Kingdom of God will be achieved.

The chief cause of my discontent is that my free personality and my professional personality do not entirely coincide. Professionally I do and say things that as a free person I would probably not do or say. This does not mean that I can divide my life into two parts, one in which my professional personality functions and one in which my free personality does what it chooses. The truth is that in each action and expression of thought the two personalities play their part to a greater or less degree. When I preached on Creative Freedom I said many things about freedom in which I concurred as a free personality. In fact the main proposition that the only way to prevent any emancipation from being a prelude to a more intricate slavery it must be an emancipation for some worthy ideal and not merely an escape from an intolerable condition is one I believe in with all my heart. But when I adopted Ahad ha-Am's attitude toward the assimilationists and described their attitude as being (p.84) I imagine it was the professional man in me that came to the fore. <sup>Am</sup> ~~And~~ I truly more free than let us say Edward Sapir the anthropologist whom I knew as a boy? Already at the age of sixteen he had made up his mind to study Indian lore. His father was the cantor of the Urach Mayyim Congregation which held its services in a private house on the northeast corner of First Avenue and Fifty-first St. It was there I would often meet Sapir and discuss Judaism with him. I remember clearly that I would take him to



task for preferring the study of Indian to that of Jewish life. I would certainly say the same thing over again to him now. But that does not detract from the fact that already in my boyhood years my advocacy of Judaism was determined by home background, desire to please parents, and the pursuit of studies leading to the rabbinate; in other words by the professional "me" in the making.

Perhaps Edward Sapir was equally influenced to negate Judaism by the calling which he had chosen. It may be that the free personality in him yearns for that ~~Juda~~ Jewishness which he is doing his utmost to live down. Who knows? This is the tragedy of Jewish life in our day. There can scarcely be a thinking Jew who is not a divided personality, whether he be a rabbi or an out and out assimilationist.

I hope I am not laying myself open to the charge of hypocrisy. I do not permit my professional personality to do or say things which my free personality would repudiate. I have never taught belief in miracles supernatural revelation or resurrection. In fact I make it my business to insist that these ideas are not only antiquated but dangerous. The furthest I permit my professional personality to go beyond what my free mind ~~leads~~ leads me to believe is to affirm the future of the Jewish people. All too often I feel like a captain who is leading a forlorn hope but who must not betray what he believes will be the likely outcome of his charge. Is such a captain a hypocrite, if he tries to tell his followers that there is a chance of their winning the battle? Yet what would he not give to be elsewhere? It is in this sense that most of what I wrote in Judaism as a Civilization is the product of my position as rabbi and teacher of inspirational instead of informative subject matter. This distortion of my mental makeup from its natural bent which would express itself in the lore of objective and tested truth into the artificial twist required by propagandist ideology is the bane of my life. Every statement in that book, which





deals with the past or the present represents my unqualified conviction but as soon as I begin making statements of a programmatic character I have to put on mental blinkers so that I should not be distracted by the realities of the situation which spell wantlessness as far as Jewish life is concerned. Yes, this is just what it comes down to, urging people to want something which would undoubtedly add to their spiritual stature if they possessed it, but concerning which I cannot say with all my heart that it is the sole and indispensable means to their salvation in the here or in the hereafter. Yet if I am to create a want how else am I to do it than by giving the impression that upon the fulfilment of that want their very salvation depends. This is the evil of all propaganda, moral as well as religious.

But the average mind being what it is is not given to appreciating the worth of anything except at the expense of something else. The only way therefore to convince one of the worthwhileness of any good is to declare or imply all alternatives as irredeemably bad. That it is impossible to reckon with human beings as though they were all equally amenable to the appeal of objective truth or goodness is the inference one must draw from the chapter Pro and Contra in Brothers Karamazov where the author in his inimitable fashion draws up a brief for the Church. To save mankind from barbarism the Church has found it necessary to resort to the very means Jesus is supposed to have rejected when he was tempted by Satan, namely, mysteries, miracles and authority. How superbly Dostovetsky interprets the theme Ahad ha-Am touches upon in his "Prophet and Priest."

I possess neither the gift nor the freedom of some to be a prophet, but am fated to serve in the capacity of priest. If I had not believed that despite the need for compromise with truth and goodness, imposed upon the priest by his propagandist function, he is nevertheless a civilizing agency, I would under no circumstances



consent to play the part I do. I cannot help feeling that a Jew who alienates himself from Jewish life is vulgar and despicable. The following story which an old Americanized Jew told my brother-in-law, Max Rubin, is an illustration.

Years ago his son, who was then a little boy, would visit the home of the late Judge Samuel Greenbaum. Once the boy came to his father with the question: "Papa, can a Jew marry a Christian?" The father who already at that time had been totally estranged from Judaism but not sufficiently so as to be able to answer outright in the affirmative began to spar for time by saying to his son, "Why do you put that question to me?" The boy replies, "The Greenbaums have a little girl whom I love very much. I would like to marry her when I grow up." "But what makes you think that they are Christian?" asked the father. "Because I happened to be there a Friday night and I saw candles lit on the table and they all said prayers," the boy replied.

When I hear a story like that I cannot but wax indignant at the lightheartedness with which our people empty their lives of everything that is spiritually beautiful. I am quite sure that the Jew who told that story to Max had not the least compunction about breaking with Jewish life and that he has put nothing in its place. Would it not have been better for Jews as well as non-Jews if a man like that could have been propagandized into being a Jew rather than remain the non-descript whose children will revert no doubt to some superstitions cult like Catholicism or Christian Science? There is need for spiritual propaganda. We still need the "priests" to save mankind from sheer brutishness. But if I had my choice I would have preferred to leave that work to others.

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Tuesday, April 23, 1931, 4:35 P.M.

I am now at the Statler Hotel, Detroit, on the 8th floor, room 872. I got here about 2:30 this afternoon to rest up for the lecture which I am scheduled to deliver tonight under the auspices of the Jewish Forum. The Forum is an institution which is supported by the local Jewish Federation. In former years a lecturer would be invited every other week. This year on account of the lack of funds, only three lecturers have been invited. The other two were Allen and Salo Baron and I am the third. I owe my coming here to Samuel Levine who is in charge of whatever Jewish center work exists here. He was formerly a student of mine at the Training School. There are four other graduates of that school doing Jewish work in this city. They are Berlatsky, Houtz and his wife (formerly Miss Bokstein).

I was met at the station by Levine, Berlatsky and Mr. Ehrlich. Mr. Ehrlich visited the SAJ a few years ago with the purpose of organizing here a similar group, or at least introducing services similar to those held at the SAJ synagogue. I am to be at his house for dinner tonight. From the little that I saw of him, however, I gather that the general crisis has put a damper on whatever ambition he or his friends may have cherished to do anything that is Jewishly constructive.

The calm which I am enjoying at this moment is a marked contrast to the agitated state of mind in which I left New York last night. I got up a little while ago from a nap, took a cold shower and dressed myself for the evening. I turned on the radio and am listening to soft music which is in keeping with my general sense of well being which I have not enjoyed for a long time, practically since I had the attack of the grip in the beginning of January. But why couldn't I sit quietly and just allow myself to be carried along on the waves of music? Is it the fact that my mind keeps reverting to the lecture which



I have to give tonight? Or is it that I am too self conscious of the transitory character of the state of equilibrium and am therefore anxious to do something whereby that state would remain in memory at least. It seems to me that I have touched upon the principal motivating force behind all creative effort that is engaged in for its own sake.

When I think of my own poor attempts at creative work I at once lose the calm which I have been enjoying and am in danger of beginning to whine and gloom. Every time I take hold of the book I handed in for the Rosenwald prize I come across ideas so clumsily expressed that I wish I had not handed it in. I become frightfully aware of my stammering and halting speech, of the thin trickle of words that I manage to pump up to extinguish as it were the burning desire for self expression, when what I need is a gushing stream. (I know it is a stupid simile but I wasn't going to allow what was in my mind just now to be squelched just because I couldn't think of a happier simile by which to articulate it.)

And now for the agitated state of mind I was in last night. That was the climax of a inner storm that has been burning for a number of weeks on account of the SAJ. The organization has been short of funds for the last few months and has found it hard to pay salaries to teachers Eisenstein, the ~~xxxxxx~~, the janitor, the ~~xxxxx~~ cantor and the ~~xxxxxxx~~ sexton. In addition the subsidies which helped the organization meet its budget during the last few years have been paid in. In addition to an accumulated deficit of about \$60,000 (which includes the \$10,000 they owe me) they are short of \$20,000 to balance the annual budget for the coming year. The only one who is making a serious effort to deal with the financial problem of the SAJ is Harry Liebovitz. A week ago last Monday he sent out invitations to about fifty-five members for a dinner meeting at a hotel. Only twelve showed up out of the eighteen





On train to New York, Wednesday, April 23, 1931

who had promised to come. Every one who spoke gave advice how to wrench contributions from those who are in a position to give but in no way hinted what share of the burden he was prepared to take over. The general tone of the meeting was pessimistic. Harry Liebovitz who sat next to me suggested to me that it might be advisable to sell the present building and to move into a suite of rooms like those of the Jewish Club. I mentioned my withdrawal as a possible means of easing the situation, but he wouldn't hear of it, and said emphatically that if I withdrew the SAJ would have to disband. The only one who sounded a hopeful note was Semel. He resorts to the usual method of people that take part in meetings where they want their opinion to count. He waits till everybody has spoken and offers a synthesis of all the suggestions made. Everyone that precedes usually suggests only the one plan that to him seems most promising. Semel then comes along and points out that all of the plans proposed should be tried. There is no question in my mind that Semel is as vain as any man who is in the public eye and studies to make a good impression. Fortunately he uses his vanity as an incentive for furthering the public good.

The meeting had a very depressing effect on me which was in no way mitigated by Joe Levy who accompanied me on my walk home. Fortunately I did not have to preach last Saturday. I was, therefore, spared the gruelling necessity of driving my feelings into my subconscious and operating with puppet sentiments and ideas with which to hold the ears of the hundred people who come to services on Saturday. There was a Board meeting scheduled for last Monday night, which I had practically resolved not to attend, because I wanted to avoid being irritated on the eve of my leaving for Detroit. But I had to change my plan on account of Eisenstein.



Eisenstein called me upon Monday about 3:00 P.M. and asked me whether I expected to attend the Board meeting. When I told him that I did not intend to come he said he must come over to see me to discuss his own problem. We strolled in the Park for a while. During the entire time he kept on insisting that it is up to me to force the members of the Board to give him a definite answer whether they want him to be associated with the SAJ next year. I was rather annoyed by the manner in which he pressed me. It displayed an impatience characteristic of immaturity which I have recently begun to be painfully aware of in him. One of my outstanding weaknesses is to ascribe to young people greater maturity than they actually possess. In my first contacts with them I treat them on a plane of complete intellectual and emotional equality, only to be sooner or later disillusioned.

But whether I approved of Eisenstein's manner or not, I felt that I had to follow up my recent efforts to get the Board to elect him as associate rabbi. I went to the SAJ House and from there called up a few members to make sure that they would come to the meeting. This, of course, necessitated my coming too.

Seldom did I attend a meeting in the course of which I was so suddenly catapulted from a state of exhilaration to a state of despair. The exhilaration was due to the offer brought in by the Liebovitz's to buy cemetery ground for the SAJ in memory of their father who died recently -- an offer that would bring to its treasury in the course of some years a sum amounting to almost \$100,000. The conditions attached to the gift constituted a challenge to provide for the budget. But when Harry Liebovitz handed me the budget I was dumbfounded. I saw that it made no provision even for an executive director, to say nothing of assistant rabbi, that it cut down the school item from \$4700 to \$2500, reduced the \$600 for my secretary to \$00 and stated that the \$5500 for insurance fund (euphemism for the salary they give me



or owe me and from which they deduct \$1300 for insurance) should be made up from voluntary contributions. There was nothing for me to do but to state that I cannot be expected to make bricks without straw, to insist upon the old school budget and to sacrifice my salary in order that they might engage some one to assist me with the details.

Having made the offer I felt I had a right to give vent to my resentment at the refusal of the Board members to take up Liebovitz's challenge and to make themselves responsible for raising the funds to meet the budget. I had all the members in mind but I let it out on Jacob Levy who a little before had refused to accept the chairmanship of the committee to <sup>raise</sup> ~~raise~~ the necessary funds. I spoke excitedly -- with what effect on Jacob Levy, I cannot tell, because I had to get away from the meeting to make the train for Detroit.

In the course of the remarks that Semel made in acknowledgment of Liebovitz's offer he stated that the Liebovitzs were moved to take that step by the sermon I had delivered on the last day of Pesah. The subject of that sermon was "When God Remembers the Dead." I then pointed out that the dead live on in the deeds that we do for their sake. It would indeed be interesting to know whether there was any actual connection between the sermon and Liebovitz's offer.

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The lecture on the "Evolution of the Jewish Religion" I gave at the Detroit Forum last night got across beautifully. All who were present followed it attentively and the questions that were asked were surprisingly much to the point. Neither Rabbi Marshman nor Rabbi Fram had a single word to say to me about the lecture. The former was probably shocked out of his wits by ~~what~~ what I said; the latter has probably no wits about the matter at all.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Ehrlich took me to the train.

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"He shot an anaconda and ate some of it." This is what I just read in the Saturday Review about a young man who hiked from Nicaragua to New York. And here I am groaning over the rotten food I had to pay for dearly in the dining cars on the trains to and from Detroit. It seems to me that the worst side to Kashrut is that it makes one a slave to home cooking. Darn the Goyim. They seem to have a special knack for making food taste like straw. They don't even know how to prepare a decent piece of bread. They cannot leave well enough alone, but must add some greasy concoction to cause their bread to crumble into tasteless morsels in the mouth. They haven't the slightest conception of the importance of the right amount of salt in bread. This is all silly and I deplore that this business of eating should have to be taken so seriously because of the care with which my Jewish stomach is upset.

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Sunday, April 26, 1931

Pesah Ginzberg, one of the younger Hebrew poets, who lives in Palestine, came to see me last Friday in reference to getting subscribers to the Maznayim. His visit was preceded by a letter from Byalik urging me to do all I can for that magazine. Ginzberg spoke rhapsodically of Byalik's spiritual influence on the Jewish life of Palestine. As many as four thousand people came to greet Byalik on Simhat Torah. Aside from his greatness as a poet, he pours forth a continuous stream of conversation full of wit, wisdom and learning. If there were a way of recording that conversation the Hebrew literature would be enriched by several volumes of the most magnificent prose. There has developed however an opposition group which is combating in the magazine, Ketubim, Byalik's efforts to renew interest in ancient Hebrew literature, especially the medieval poets. The Ketubim group hold in contempt everything preceding the literary endeavors of the present younger generation.



According to Ginzberg the Jewish community in Palestine is growing inwardly stronger and more self-reliant despite all the troubles it has been having the last two years. He described the efforts of Magnes and the B'rith Shalom as ultimately helpful to the establishment of friendly relations between the Jews and the Arabs. As he spoke I felt a yearning to visit Palestine this summer.

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I based the sermon I delivered yesterday on the text from Abot III "He whose wisdom exceeds his works his wisdom does not endure." As I was organizing the sermon in my mind while the Torah was being read, it occurred to me that I might apply that dictum to the failure of what is known as Judische Wissenschaft to stem the tide of assimilation so that ~~the~~ ~~xxx~~ very achievements of the founders of that Wissenschaft are in danger of remaining futile. Had it not been for the Zionist movement which has provided Jewish life with the opportunity for works, the process of assimilation would have been much further advanced than it is today.

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I forgot to mention that last Thursday night I attended the meeting ~~at~~ Prof. Ginzberg called at his home to consider how best to signalize Cyrus Adler's 70th birthday which is due in the fall of 1933. Neither Prof. Davidson who was the third member of the committee nor I could think of any fitting manner of celebrating that anniversary. Ginzberg suggested that we interest the friends of Adler in getting up a fund to make it possible for H. J. Kassoovsky to finish and publish his Concordance of the Talmud in honor of Adler. Both Davidson and I thought it was an excellent suggestion.

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I am still under the spell of the remarkable piece of writing which was left with me yesterday by a man named Siegmund B. Sonnenborn of Baltimore, who came to see me. He came to me through the mediation of Charles Corn. He spent the first half hour of his stay in reciting to me the facts of his life that bore on the object of his visit. I say "recited" because when he left he gave me, besides the piece of writing I just referred to, two typewritten pages which contained a summary of all the facts he told me. (Dr. Kaplan: note: the attached copy you refer to at this point has been removed from the volume. p.93)

The piece of writing which moved me profoundly is to form the introduction of his modernist version of the Psalms. It sets forth a humanist interpretation of religion. Although it assumes practically the same premise as Bertrand Russell does in his "What I Believe" which appears in this week's issue of the Nation (April 29, 1931) it is much more affirmative in its conclusions than Russell's article and on the whole much sounder. Incidentally a statement he makes in that paper has roused in me the desire to work out from a psychological standpoint the issue between communism and Individualism. The statement is that the communistic method is based upon the distrust of the individual, especially in his capacity as a job-giver.

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The key to the understanding to the frequent fits of life-weariness that overcome me may perhaps be found in the last part of the article by Russell which I mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

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Last Sunday I urged the Senior class of the Institute to take the initiative in organizing a group of young people for the purpose of carrying a program based on (p.94)



Today I defined God to the same group as synonymous with the life, the unity and the striving for perfection manifest in the world.

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Thursday, April 30, 1931

I can think of no better analogy to illustrate the conception of God than the one I used a long time ago in one of the articles I wrote for the Menorah Journal. God is to the complex of phenomena what the meaning of a drama is to the syllables, words and sentences that go to make up the drama.

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Tuesday, May 5, 1931

The storm that is just now raging within me makes it difficult for me to set down in writing all that is on my mind just now. I wish my reason were able to cope with the host of impulses, hungers, ambitions that sweep like hurricanes over my soul. My reason tells me that I ought to consider myself one of the happiest in the world. I have a home; my wife and children, thank God, are in normal health; I am free from organic disease; I make a comfortable living; I have won the right to intellectual freedom; I enjoy the good will and respect of a few hundred people; I have influenced the thinking of a good many men and women. Compared with the sufferings and deprivations which fall to the lot of the vast majority of human beings, my unhappy state of mind is merely a form of self-indulgence. But while it lasts it blots out all rational considerations and all sense of proportion. It was of course stupid of me to ascribe, as I did on the end of the last page, my eternal discontent to so simple a cause as that mentioned by Russell. The fact is that I am by nature too socially minded to be able to confine myself when weighing the pros and cons of happiness, to the advantages of my own secure and sheltered life.



The injustice, stupidity and cruelty that mark every phase of human life I come in contact with upset my peace of mind. Last night, for example, I went to see the play "Five Star Final." On my way to the theater I passed the Christian Science church on Central Park West and 68th Street. I saw throngs coming out of the church and throngs standing in line waiting to get into a church. I immediately lost my mental poise. I became aware of the hopelessness of ever getting the masses to repudiate their superstitions. We are supposed to be living in an age of enlightenment and science and yet such a farrage of the most incredible nonsense as that which goes to make up Christian Science has mesmerized millions of men and women who are generally regarded as intelligent and educated. These reflections formed a fitting prelude to the play I saw last night which told the story of what goes on behind the scenes in a publishing house of a tabloid newspaper which caters to the moronic tastes of its readers by serving them with all sorts of scandal to titillate their suppressed sex desires. The play brought out the fact that the publisher compels those in charge of these papers to go to all lengths to secure circulation, regardless of the lives and reputations that they may be the cause of ruining. The central character of the play was the editor who had something of a conscience and who inwardly rebelled at the idea of raking up the story of an unfortunate young woman who had shot her betrayer. What led him to stifle his conscience was the fear of starvation. He rationalized his cowardice by persuading himself that "ideals don't patch pants," and when he would save up enough to live on he would turn his back forever on the vileness to which he was stooping. That was all I needed to lose the little self-control that enabled me to retain my balance. If I had a few bombs I would have gone right there and then and planted them beneath the homes of some of the owners of these filthy generators. I inwardly cursed a social order that permits such





criminal dispensers of moral disease to flourish and batten. Of course my impotence and the impotence of the playwright who probably tried by means of this play to arouse the social conscience, and of the numerous audiences that probably include sensitive people like myself, only helped to deepen my gloom.

Life for me is not just a pedestrian affair as it is for most people; neither is it a matter of climbing mountains to some pinnacle of attainment as it is for the privileged few, but a continual learning to walk on a tight rope. My task consists in having to control my personality and my experiences so that I might retain my mental balance and sanity. I am pretty successful when I perform in public but when I am by myself I always slip. Fortunately there is always the ~~xxxxx~~ net of habit to save me.

The source of all the social evil may be traced to organized religion. Those who are at the head of religious organizations are not inherently worse than other people, but they are far more blameworthy for the evil that they abet and encourage. After that upsetting experience of last evening, I had something additional to embitter me. I was looking over the work that the Seminary had handed in some time ago. In one of the notebooks I came across the note on Theology, the course given by Louis Finkelstein. I was completely amazed at what I read. In the first place the ideas were taken for the most part from the second hand sources dealing with reconstruction of the religion of Israel during the first commonwealth. Those ideas seemed (after discounting all the possible inadequacies due to the student who recorded them) detached from each other and from the context of the best of Jewish life ancient or modern. The courses which I have been giving to the junior classes at the Teachers Institute represent much more original thinking and organization of ideas. And Finkelstein gives this kind of elementary knowledge, which he seems to be picking up as he goes along in his capacity as associate professor of Theology.



But it is not this that angers me. The main course of my being vexed by the contents of his course is that he openly disavows belief in revelation and at the same time poses before the world as an Orthodox rabbi and functions as the head of a strictly Orthodox ~~xx~~ congregation. Of course I am happy that he is contributing to the cause of enlightenment by teaching the way he does. I feel quite confident that I may take some of the credit for having made such frank teaching of the modern version of the development of Jewish religion possible in the Seminary. But why should all these concessions to modernism be denied, and their implications resisted by Finkelshtein and the others who equivocate like him? When dishonesty is thus rife among the spiritual leaders ~~and~~ what right have we to expect regard for the decencies and moralities from the harassed and fear driven multitude?

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Friday , May 8, 1931

I came across a review of a recent book by Robert Nathan called The Orchid. The reviewer refers to one of the characters of that book, the proprietor of a carousel who wishes to be an operatic singer, and quotes the following which the author puts in the mouth of the owner of the carousel:

"When I see the improvements all around, I am ashamed for my carousel. One hundred children visit it in an afternoon, and because of me they still believe in the lion, the camel, and the giraffe... I will take out these lions and tigers, I will subtract these animals, and in their places I will put automobiles and flying machines and steam engines. That will be an education for the children, it will be modern, it will be of today."

No parable could more aptly satirize my efforts to modernize Jewish life.

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Saturday night, May 9, 1931

The Sabbath services at the SAJ today was one of those occasions which belong to the ordeals which test my acceptance of my spiritual status quo to the straining point. On these occasions I have to forget all my doubts and despairs, suppress all my inward struggles and identify myself completely with the part that life has assigned to me, that of the preaching pragmatist. That is probably the inherent weakness of civilization. Civilization is a heroic attempt to fit the confusion of human existence into the framework of a drama with a purpose. The unfortunate thing is that most people are cast for parts for which they are not adapted. I am one of those people whom it is undoubtedly most difficult to cast for the proper part, because I belong to those whose reach far exceeds their grasp. I should have been a Morris R. Cohen. That is to say my ambition lay in the direction of demonstrating the supremacy of reason. It is a philosophy such as he develops in his recent book Reason the the Nature of Things that I probably was most qualified to make a contribution to as far as my mental reach was concerned. But I lacked the mental grasp for the mastery of mathematics and science necessary nowadays to anyone who is to say anything philosophically authoritative. At the time he chose his career I was in a fair way to choose a similar career. But I was not sufficiently mature to overcome the pressure brought upon me by my parents to enter the rabbinate and the expectations roused by my seven years of attendance at the Seminary. It was in 1901 or 1902 that Woodbridge asked me whether I would accept one of the fellowships offered by the Ethical Culture Society to take post-graduate courses at Harvard. That was after I had come out second in line for consideration for a Columbia fellowship in philosophy. I then regarded all contact with the Ethical Culture Society as treason to Judaism and would not hear of Woodbridge's suggestion. That choice was final. It shut



me in forever within the narrow horizon of the rabbinical calling in New York City where that calling limits one to acquaintanceship with the most boring set of human beings in the world, all of the one species designated by Mencken as booboisie. I am perhaps a cad for speaking in that way of people who think well of me and respect me. But I can't help being resentful of their absolute irresponsiveness to anything worthwhile that I ever ask them to do. If, e.g. Finkelstein tells me a story that Maurice Samuel is hard up, and calls upon me that I should help him raise a fund of a thousand dollars as a loan for Maurice Samuel, I naturally think of my many "friends" and "admirers." I meet the wealthiest among them, ask them what to do to get \$500 for Samuel, whom they know very well and on whose literary talent I expatrate at greant length. The answer I get is "Let Samuel turn to the Free Loan Association."

This is only one of the many instances of irresponsiveness I have to contend with. Instead of my being able to use them to carry out some of the cultural or Palestinian projects on which my heart is set they manage to exploit me to the full without giving me any moral or spiritual return. They come off rather cheaply with their Jewish religiosity. I cannot get them to spend a dollar on anything not connected with their own "shul" interests. Dushkin has been dunning me to get the SAJ to pay the National Education Association \$50. I can't even bring up the matter because I know beforehand they will turn it down. And so on and so on ---

To come back to what I started out with, the strain of today's services at the SAJ. My brother-in-law, Dr. I. C. Rubin's son, Harvey, was Bar Mitzvah today. About a year and a half ago his grandfather, Israel Unterberg, began asking me about the "aftarah to be read by Harvey. Harvey has been taking lessons in the reading of the "aftarah since last summer. For a time he gave up attending Hebrew School on



account of those lessons, and it was only after much pleading with his mother that he was made to resume attendance at Hebrew school. I know that he finds no intrinsic interest in the Hebrew school and has tried to persuade his younger cousin, David Kaplan, Ira's boy, to pay no attention to his Hebrew school studies. What likelihood is there that Harvey will grow up a Jew? All this I had to forget and to speak as though I felt that there was in Harvey the human material that was ready to be moulded into Jewish personality. I was doing exactly what is expected of the high power salesman who, knowing the poor quality of the stuff he tries to sell, has to give a line of talk that will make the prospective buyer believe that he is being offered the chance of a lifetime. But I have been doing this thing so often that I am a veritable expert at it. My only defense is that my speeches are perfectly harmless. They are at least without the dangerous consequences that may sometimes result from the work of a newspaper editor who sells his soul in order to escape starvation.

The very fuss to which Bar Mitzvah occasions like this gives rise is an added cause of that occasion being an ordeal to me. The synagogue was crowded. People who never go inside a synagogue from one end of the year to another, are there. Feasts and gifts and large scale preparations are the order of the day. All for the sake of what? Torah? Judaism? Surely not. Cecil Ruskey made a good suggestion. That I establish Bar Mikvah parlors on the order of the funeral parlors so that we might get the crowds every Sabbath. How all this tortures my soul! But I must play the part which life has assigned to me, and play it to the best of my ability, or I would lose caste.

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Sunday, May 10, 1931

In this state of irritation I make a gesture of protest. The gesture is intended for my own benefit solely and no one knows anything about it. I balk at having to attend the supper at the home of the Bar Mitzvah parents. It is enough, in my opinion, that Lena attends. She manages to find some excuse for my absence. Instead I go to take a walk and end up by taking a seat at the theatre to see Pirandollo's "As You Desire Me."

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Wednesday, May 13, 1931

The story of "As you Desire Me" is that of a woman who one month after she was married met with the misfortune that ruined her life. It was during the war. The Germans passed through the town where she lived. Her husband was away at the time. They destroyed the villa and carried her off as a prisoner of war. When the play opens, we see her ten years later leading the life of a cabaret artist and the mistress of a writer of stories. Her lover suspects her of ~~faithful~~ faithlessness to him and wants to kill her. She returns from the cabaret drunk and boisterous. She is followed by an Italian Baffi a friend of her husband's who recognizes her as the Lucia, the wife of his friend, and he tells her that her husband has been searching for her everywhere for the last ten years and is waiting for her return. At first she would not hear of returning. The thought of the abandoned life she had been led to adopt as a result of her disaster rises before her and stands in the way of her being able to resume life at the point she left off when her husband had last seen her. Finally she yields despite the fact that she knows how hard it will be for her to live down the past ten years of her life. She returns to her villa, high strung and sensitive, avoiding the sight of everyone except her husband. During the first conversation she begs her husband to think



of her as he would desire her to be and cries out "Give me time."

The rest of the play carried the theme into the intricacies of psychology which deal with the question of belief and proof, and tries to make the point that where there is no intuitive faith there can be no proof that would be absolutely convincing. When I saw the play I was tremendously thrilled by the first act in which I beheld a fitting parable for the return of Israel to her God, a parable that might illustrate the point that what the Jewish people needed now to prove that her soul had not become extinct was time.

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I have agreed to read a paper at the next convention of the Rabbinic Assembly on the attitude of Conservative Judaism toward Biblical Criticism. I suggested the subject at one of the meetings of the Executive Committee and I did not have either the physical or moral strength to refuse when I was asked to present a paper on it.

I have begun to read on the subject - Dr. Rothstein, Wiener who take the Orthodox position from the standpoint of supernaturalism, though not from the standpoint of Jewish tradition, and am beginning to realize that I shall not get anywhere if I will attempt to formulate some kind of affirmative attitude that conservative Judaism ought to take toward Biblical Criticism. It seems to me that the only logical procedure is first to point out that the confusion that exists at the present time with regard to conservative Judaism is due to the fact that it is a term applied to the left wing of Orthodoxy or the Right wing of Reform. As the former it holds on to (p.101) ;as the latter it adopts the standpoint of Higher criticism. There is no middle position. That is why there really cannot be any such thing as Conservative Judaism if those who identified with it insist that Judaism is essentially a religion, for as a religion it must be either a revealed religion or a naturally evolved religion. If there is to be room for





a third party in Judaism Judaism must be viewed as something more inclusive than religion, namely a civilization in which religion (or the texts which embody it) may be held by some as supernaturally revealed and by others as naturally evolved. If Judaism is to be identified as a naturally evolved religion then the only interpretation that can be given to                    is a genus for religion. But if Judaism be made synonymous with the civilization of the Jewish people, then can be reinterpreted as implying the concept of authority derived from the collective sanction based on the spiritual aspect of national life.

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Thursday, May 14, 1931

One of the most illuminating concepts in M. R. Cohen's "Reason and Nature" is that of polarity. I arrived at that concept independently and have even gone so far as to work out somewhere its implications for Judaism. Polarity is an object of immediate experience in the conflict that goes on within us between the physical and social instincts, between the hungers and reason, or as the ancients were wont to put it, between the body and the soul. If this experience of polarity truly reflects the nature of polarity as such then polarity must be like the action of a scale trying to attain equilibrium. This means that to operate with the ego or Reason as though it could be isolated is absurd. Correspondingly the universe and God represent the polar aspects of the same reality, and to operate with the notion of godhood apart from its relation to the universe is like trying to operate with positive electricity to the neglect of the negative electricity.

How then shall we suppose of that unrelenting desire of the self for ~~survival~~ survival? It surely cannot survive as an entity independent of a physical counterpart. The answer that suggests itself is that the only way to satisfy that desire is to render the self-aspect



of our individual polarity transferable from our own bodies to other bodies. Through propagation the body aspect of our individual polarity is actually transferred to other bodies. The desire that our children should cherish our traditions and ideals is essentially the desire to transfer to them our self-aspect as well as bodily aspect, thereby assuring ourselves a form of survival which is as near to personal identity and continuity as is possible in the face of the fact of death. The desire, however, to use our own children as a means of continuing our personal identity must necessarily result in two conspicuous evils, first in assuming that the children are sufficiently docile to render the process successful we are bound to reduce human life to a limited number of patterns which would keep on repeating themselves. And secondly it is quite impossible to expect that the body-aspect of the child should be so much like our own that our soul or self aspect would match it accurately. This is bound to result in maladjustment and unhappiness. The progress of civilization consists in finding ways whereby the self-aspect might be rendered transferrable without having to depend upon one's children to take it over. In all creative effort, especially art, the self-aspect is externalized and then adopted by those to whom it appeals.

As far as I am concerned, I am succeeding very little in getting my children to take over my self-aspect. I believe in letting them have their way; I, therefore, do not force them to cultivate a knowledge of Hebrew or to devote themselves to learning. On the other hand, I do not possess the ability to externalize my personality by means of song, story, poem or painting. The only kind of creative effort I probably might have succeeded in had I worked with the proper material is in the domain of social adjustment. But to exert one's efforts in that direction with Jews in order to help them survive as Jews during the process of social self-adjustment is like trying



to make ropes with sand. In my frustration I turn to writing in this journal as the only means left me to externalize and render transferable that aspect of my being I experience as my soul, self or reason.

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Thursday, May 21, 1931

The anaology by which R. Ishmael illustrates the manner in which God will settle the dispute between the body and the soul as to which is to blame for man's sin (Wayikra Rabba IV, 5) hits off accurately what goes on in my mind with regard to the relation of the body to that something we call ego or soul. Speaking for myself my worst enemy is my body; I dare say that is the case with most human beings. I can very well understand why the ancients believed in the mortification of the body. The body is a continual drag on the mind. It interferes with the mind's work and enjoyment. It is in a continual state of dying and is forever in need of being replenished with food and drink. It is too lazy, generally, even to attend to its garbage and has to be prodded with all kinds of laxatives to keep itself clean. It is the nest of billions of microbes that are waiting to spring on the smallest lesion or scratch to manufacture their poisons and to kill it off altogether. Its living cells are centers of eternal hunger and they combine to produce those earthly desires that never know when they have had enough.

So long as we are young and our bodies don't interfere too much with our ambitions we regard them as our friends. While we enjoy enesthesia we identify ourselves so completely with our bodies that we and they seem indistinguishable. But as we get older and we have to waste our time keeping the body in order, bridling its appetites and curing it of its ills we may well pray we were free from it. That people make such a fuss over the remains of those who depart this life is as intelligible as most of the things they do. The sensible thing would be to present the remains to the medical schools for dissection





purposes. But it is not in the disposition of the body that I am interested. That other pole of its being - the ego - and as such logically bound up inextricably with it, that is the main object of these reflections. My intuition insists upon the separability and transferability of the ego despite the contention of logic that the ego is only one pole of which the other pole is the body. I am trying to habituate myself to accept what my intuition tells me and to live accordingly.

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Monday,  
June 2, 1931 (came out this afternoon to West End, 469 Westwood Ave.)

There are very many things I should like to record, but the sun is already in the West and another day will have passed without my having made much progress on the paper which I have to finish by the 20th of this month. I shall jot down only a few facts which I don't want to forget, not because they are important but because they are links in the chain of my personal life.

The sermons I delivered on the two days of Shabuot, Friday, May 22 and Saturday, May 23, were well received. The first dealt with the reinterpretation of (p.104) *for a Midrash*; the second was an application of the Midrash on *in which he accounts* for the lapse of time between the Exodus and the giving of the Torah by the fact that the Israelites were crippled when they left Egypt. This midrash gave me an opportunity to discuss the effects of the many centuries of persecution, effects which have to be lived down before we can once more become spiritually creative. I detailed these effects as being political, helplessness, economic starvation, intellectual inflexibility and spiritual narrowness, and concluded the sermon with the part of the story of "As you Desire Me" quoted above (May 13).

I should have mentioned first the annual meeting of the SAJ which took place on Sunday, May 17. Anticipating a poor attendance I sent out letters to all the members asking them to come and telling



them that there was a pleasant surprise in store for them. The surprise consisted of the announcement of the Liebovitz's offer to buy for the SAJ about 25 to 30 thousand dollars worth of cemetery plottage in memory of their father who died in the beginning of the year. This offer however is contingent upon the Society's meeting the deficit of about \$20,000 (of which they owe me \$10,000) and upon their making proper provision for the budget the next few years, assuming, of course, that it would be cut down to the bone. Most of the members suspected that they would have to pay for the pleasure of the surprise and they thought it safest to stay away. It was at the meeting that I introduced Ira Eisenstein as my assistant for the coming year.

It was not without difficulty that I got the Board to appoint Eisenstein as ~~xxxxxxx~~ assistant rabbi. They sent committees to confer with me and to urge me to try to get along without him, but I would not think of giving in to them, because I realize fully his worth to the SAJ. He, on the other hand, was being offered the position at Roxbury at a much more tempting salary. I had also to counteract the reluctance which the Board displayed in offering him the appointment. Fortunately I permitted nothing to swerve me from my purpose to have him associated with me in guiding the destinies of the SAJ. From the standpoint of the purpose of the organization he is worth more than a hundred additional members of the kind that we are likely to get. Since his appointment my mind is more at peace with regard to the SAJ and I am beginning to cherish the hope that some of the projects which will help the conception of Judaism as a civilization will at last be consummated.

Another matter upon which of late my heart is set is the re-organization of the academic department of the Teachers Institute into a College of Jewish Studies that would be authorized to give the Bachelor degree in Hebrew Literature. I urged that on various oc-





casions in my conversations with Adler, and recently (Thursday, May 14) I appeared before the Trustees of the Seminary to receive the necessary authorization to proceed with the necessary changes. It looks as though the College of Jewish Studies will finally be realized. Many years ago I devoted the greater part of my address at the Seminary exercises to the need of establishing such a college. That was in Schechter's time. Then the time was not ripe for such an undertaking. Now it merely requires manipulation of means and resources present in the general community and in the Teachers Institute.

I am still not back to my normal self physically. My hay fever has not troubled me this season so far with the exception of about two days (I think during the second week in May). But I do not enjoy my former enthusiasm. Physical exertion even of a slight degree is attended both by perspiration and a sensation resembling a slight tremor or chill of the muscles on the right side of my back. This condition has existed since I had the grip during the first week in January. The desire to get rid of it as well as the tiring effect of the meetings and banquets and speechmaking incidental to the conclusion of the academic term at the Seminary has led to my asking Adler to excuse me from all such duties and functions including the graduation exercises.

Despite my resolution to escape all speechmaking I had to accept the invitation to take part in the exercises held in the auditorium of the School for Social Research on Sunday, May 24 to celebrate the first distribution of Teachers Licenses to over 500 Hebrew Teachers. I was very unhappy in the surroundings in which I found myself. I could not get myself to believe that the occasion warranted having such fuss made over it and was exceedingly annoyed by the speech of the presiding chairman (a successful phi beta kappated lawyer named Mark Eisner) in which he spoke about Jewish education in terms that betrayed



utter lack of understanding of what it was all about. The result was that I was labored and longwinded in my delivery. To cap the climax I was followed by Robinson, the president of City College, who devoted the greater part of his speech to the demolition of my statement that the case of Judaism was like that of a tropical plant which a horticulturist tries to transplant into a temperate clime. Misunderstanding my point he made me appear as though I had singled out America as being uncongenial to Judaism. When I tried to explain to him after the meeting that I referred to modernism and not to America as the climate in which Judaism finds it difficult to thrive, and I adduced Morris R. Cohen as an instance of ~~what~~ <sup>what</sup> I meant by the branches of our people that wither in the process of transplantation, he could only answer that he didn't think much of Morris Cohen anyhow, since Morris R. Cohen was superficial in his thinking, and that I took myself too seriously. With such human shoddy in control of education what can one expect from the poor, half-frightened and timid Jewish teachers who applauded his platitudes about the good luck that Judaism is enjoying in America.

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I was scarcely aware of the task I would have on my hands when I undertook to write the paper for the next convention of the Rabbinic Assembly on The Attitude of Conservative Judaism toward Biblical Criticism. My difficulty arises not from any inability to state what I actually believe ought to be the position taken by a Jew who has been brought up to think scientifically and who wants to remain a Jew. With the views that I hold concerning the place of religion in the Jewish civilization, Biblical Criticism presents no problem from the religious point of view. It is simply a matter of getting at the facts concerning the composition of the Bible. But when I come before the Rabbinic Assembly I come before people who still speak in the confused patois of people who live on the borderline between medievalism and modernism. How to disentangle their confused ideas for them





so that they shall be in a position to have an open mind for what I have to say to them is the problem with which I have been wrestling these last few weeks.

At first blush it appears that ~~R~~ Biblical criticism is a direct attack upon the traditional conception of "Torah min ha-shom ayim." There is no gainsaying the fact that the doctrine of "Torah min ha-shamayim" was in the past regarded as a sine qua non of Judaism. We must accept Orthodoxy if we subscribe to the assumption that the continuity of Judaism calls for complete identity with the past. On the other hand, Reformism recognizes that ~~the~~ continuity <sup>does not</sup> / ~~affirmation~~ calls for complete identity, yet it fails to achieve sufficient identity with the Judaism of the past to warrant its being regarded as continuous with that Judaism. Conservatism takes the position that change there must be, hence complete identity is impossible. Yet there must be more of identity than provided for by Reformism. Applying this abstract principle to the doctrine of "Torah min ha-shamayim" Conservatism recognizes that it cannot deny the right of reason to question the tradition that the text of the Pentateuch was dictated in a supernatural manner to Moses by God and interpreted by God to Moses in the manner recorded in (p.107) <sup>פ"ד</sup>. There are many distinct phases to that tradition. 1) The text known as Pentateuch was written entirely by Moses. 2) It was written entirely by Moses at the inspiration of God or the Pentateuch is divinely inspired. 3) This inspiration of God is to be conceived as literal dictation which took place in a supernatural fashion. 4) The meaning given to the text by tradition was also conveyed by God to Moses. 5) All of this is true of the text of Pentateuch which we now possess. To omit any of these five ~~aspects~~ aspects of the doctrine is to be guilty of heresy, according to Orthodoxy. Conservatism as represented by the Historical School (Krochmal, Weiss, Frankel, Schechter, etc.) subscribed only to the





first two phases of that tradition. Although apparently retaining two phases or elements of the traditional doctrine they really retained nothing but a shadow of it. So at least the Orthodox might contend. To judge whether the substance of the doctrine is retained it is necessary to analyze that doctrine into its implications especially those of the pragmatic type. Let me try therefore to analyze each of the foregoing five aspects into its pragmatic implications.

The implications both positive and negative of the first element of the doctrine are a) The Torah is animated by a unitary purpose. b) Since that purpose deals with Israel it deserves to be adopted by those who are identified with Israel. c) The Torah is not necessarily infallible.

Of the second element of the doctrine: Since there is nothing in this element of the doctrine that limits us to any specific conception of God or of dictation by him the only implication to be drawn from that element are the following: a) The Torah constitutes the human formulation of the will of God. b) The Torah possesses a higher degree of sanctity than other writings. c) The Torah is not necessarily eternal and infallible.

Of the third element of the doctrine: a) The Pentateuch consists of infallible truth and unchangeable law. b) Every statement in it is equally authoritative and binding. c) There can be no contradiction and d) It is the only reliable proof of the existence and providence of God.

Of the fourth element: a) The oral tradition is equally binding and authoritative.

Of the fifth element: a) It is heresy to question the divine origin of the present text of the Pentateuch.

What are the implications of Biblical Criticism?

1. That the entire Pentateuch was written by Moses is a human tradition which we have a right to doubt and to subject to scrutiny.



2. That the Pentateuch was literally dictated by God is itself a human tradition which we have a right to doubt. But insofar as that human tradition demands unquestioning acceptance of the fact of supernatural intervention into the natural order of things we find ourselves compelled by Reason to deny that tradition, because Reason is the negation of the supernatural and not as the medievalists thought compatible with the acceptance of the supernatural. It is here that it will be necessary to point out that the ancient world outlook which saw personal forces in every object was unaware of supernaturalism. Supernaturalism is possible only when we artificially introduce dualism into Reality. Reality may be one or many, but there is only one way of understanding it, either that of the ancient man which is a kind of elementary reason or that of the true philosopher or scientist whose method is simply a more sharpened and systematized faith. But the dualism of the so-called scholastic philosophers is mere hocus pocus which Spinoza was the first to explode. (cf. Maimonides' assumption that the parts of scripture which represent God as having appeared in human form as dreams) Moreh II, 44 and also 33).

Both elements 4) and 5) of the doctrine of Torah min ha-shamayim are human traditions which we have a right to question and to subject to scrutiny.

The one element which Biblical Criticism leaves intact is that the Pentateuch is divinely inspired. Biblical criticism as science is thus true to form. It challenges human tradition and leaves intact the functioning of God in human life. Point out here the inconsistency of the historical school in limiting science to post-biblical literature.

Thus the implications of Biblical Criticism leave intact only element 2 of the doctrine itself.

What do the implications of Biblical Criticism do to the implications of the doctrine?





They leave intact the implications of element one and certainly of element two (cf. Spinoza who recognizes the inspiration of the biblical writers).

They work havoc with implications a) and c) but are neutral to b) of element 3.

They leave intact the implication of element 4.

They destroy implications of element 5.

The trouble with Reformism is not that it accepts Biblical Criticism but that it attacks all the implications of the doctrine with the exception of implication a) of the second element.

Conservative Judaism should therefore subscribe not to the conclusions of this or that Bible critic but to the implications underlying Biblical Criticism. It likewise accepts a sufficient number of important implications of the doctrine of Torah min ha-shamayim to feel justified in claiming that it is in continuity with Judaism of the past. Those are the implications of elements 1) and 2) of the doctrine.

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Tuesday, June 3, 1931

The foregoing analysis worked itself out with an ease and spontaneity that surprised me. If I will follow it in the paper I expect to read at the convention I will have to preface my reading with remarks that will forestall Cyrus Adler coming out afterwards with cynical remarks about my attempt at accuracy in the definition of terms. I still recall his wisecracks about the paper on the attitude of Conservatism toward Jewish nationalism I read two years ago at the convention of the Rabbinical Assembly.

If the ancient writers had been as vain as the modern writers we should have been spared all this ado in trying to make head or tail out of the history and background of their literary legacies. We should have one series of complications less in our attempt to get people to think straight and honestly in the matter of religion.



"The poet of the book of Job," writes H. P. Smith in Essays in Biblical Interpretation, p. 4, "cheated himself of a monument more enduring than bronze, by preserving his anonymity." What becomes of all that passion which a poor fool like me pours forth into this effort to externalize himself into something that will abide the ravages of time even if it be only for a year after he is gone? I really do not think that being remembered is what motivates me to do what I am doing now. It is probably nothing more than the urge to do something, not to be merely the passive recipient of the glorious sunshine above me and of the dazzling brilliancy of ideas and expression in the books about me. I am passionately desirous of activity, and not finding any outlet in affairs I resort to this poor substitute. It would seem therefore that it is not for the sake of enduring that life is engaged in transforming environment, but for the sake of functioning while it exists.

If this is the case, the historical religions have been entirely on the wrong track in sharpening men's appetites for immortality. The pagan religions, and the Jewish religion in its pagan stage were more in keeping with human nature by treating with neglect the problem of existence after death. The Egyptians started the nuisance of making ~~xxx~~ that existence a matter for religion, at least as far as royalty and outstanding persons of the upper classes were concerned. But the real mischief developed when the historical religions or the organized authorities representing them found themselves powerless in face of the problem who to enable the lives of human beings to function to their fullest capacity. Their own selfishness and the opposition of the lay governing classes prevented them from carrying out such a purpose. They found a ready substitute in diverting men's minds to the hereafter and working up their imaginations to a high pitch by picturing the glories of an immortal life after death.



The ancients dreaded death just as much as we do. The unsophisticated among them believed that it is man's own fault that he is subject to death. The story of Paradise, told in the book of Genesis assumes that when God created man he intended him to be immortal. But this is a different thing entirely from wishing to keep on living and meddling with one's survivors after one has departed this world. On the contrary, it appears that the ancients dreaded having to play such a role. One might say they preferred annihilation to such a fate. I know, of course, the importance attached in the Gnostic literature to "being remembered" an importance reflected in such a phrase as (p.111)

I believe that this hankering after being remembered is the forerunner of the belief in the immortality of the soul, the name being identified in the minds of the ancients as a quality independent of the individual. But this very value set upon being remembered is part of the process whereby religion diverted men's minds from making every possible effort to express themselves fully while they live.

There are twenty-million unemployed in the Western world today, twenty-million people deprived of the most elementary right to have their lives function in any capacity whatsoever. When we imprison a criminal we deprive him of that elementary right but we at least feed him and give him lodging. Society recognizes no obligation to enable human beings to have their lives function even to a small fraction of their capacity much less to have them function to their full capacity. What should be the business of religion if not to denounce and combat the social wrongs, the greed and the monopolistic graft that are responsible for this situation? But how can the men who dispense religion do such a thing, if they are the hirelings of those who thrive on the social wrongs. This vicious circle is so apparent yet no one but the communists have succeeded in breaking through it. "Not a new argument but a new society will cure the soul of man" Irwin Edman, The Contemporary and His Soul.





Why then do I sit here calmly playing with such irrelevant problems as Biblical Criticism? If I were twenty years old now, and knowing what I now do, I certainly would not have gone into the ministry. That is assuming that my parents were better off and less fanatical than they were when I was twenty years old. I mention the hypothetical situation of my being twenty and free to choose my course in life only to accentuate that I was never actually free to do otherwise than I did, and that my lack of freedom was part of the universal snarl.

I do believe, however, that each one of us should use whatever medium he works with to arrive and to get others to arrive with him at a true understanding of how traditional religion has helped to befuddle the race. The problem I am dealing with just now surely has very little bearing on the world crisis through which we are passing, but it cannot be altogether useless and irrelevant, if it will help to emancipate a few people from the strangle hold of Orthodoxy.

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The task of clarification is complicated by the astigmatism of most of the so called spiritual leaders of our people. They refuse to use the two eyes of their mind to the same degree. With one eye they see "supernaturalism" and with the other "science." I have just read the first chapter of M. Gudemann's Judische Apolegetik. The main point is that the Jewish religion is the resultant of two factors, supernatural revelation and the spiritual forces within the Jewish people. The first he merely affirms by reiterating what Maimonides has to say concerning the mysterious character of the theophany at Sinai. The main substance of the chapter is devoted to proving ~~that~~ not merely that the Torah was unconsciously the product also of Jewish spiritual genius but that it was consciously such. Otherwise there would be no point to what he says. He himself fails to make this distinction.



This intellectual astigmatism throws the entire picture of Judaism into a most distorted perspective. His argument is full of sophistries. To give only a few instances. He draws no distinction between the concepts of (p.112) and and treats them as though they were synonymous. His interpretation of is absurd and his construction of the Mishnaic dictum given with all the garnishings of Judische Wissenschaft is rank nonsense. There is even a tinge of dishonesty in the title which leads one to expect that the factor of "Offenbarung" would be explained with some degree of fullness corresponding to that given to the factor of "Volksgeist." That disingenuousness is carried a step further in the caption at the top of each page where only "Offenbarung" appears.

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I have just learned from Irwin Edman's new book "The Contemporary and His Soul" that Proust was "harassed over the evanescence of sensations and of memories and the struggle to keep hold of some portion of the self that will survive the flux of time." I have been anxious to read Proust for the longest time but I can never get to him because of my limited time.

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Thursday, June 4, 1931

I had to be in the city today to officiate at the wedding of the daughter of the Cahans. Having been afflicted with a headache and not knowing what to do with about an hour of time after I had lunch at the Broadway dining restaurant, I walked into a movie place and saw a picture. The picture in itself was silly but good enough to serve as an illustration of what we have to endure from our "glorious tradition." It told the story of a young man whose mother ~~whose mother~~ wrote a syndicated column for the daily newspapers giving advice to lovers and





lovelorn, parents and children about all of their intimate problems. She died before the young man became of age. In her anxiety for his future she left him a whole trunkful of letters, giving him advice on how he should bear himself on every possible occasion. She was especially prolix and detailed with regard to his courting, marrying and honeymoon period. She described the kind of young lady he should choose. When he finally met one who, he imagined, conformed to the specifications left by his mother, he behaved toward her with a prudishness and restraint which made her honeymoon period a nightmare. She left him and he tried to win her back, but of no avail. It was only when his uncle who realized what was the trouble stole the trunkful of letters and threw it into the river that the spell of the mother over her son was broken because he realized that from now on he would no longer be able to depend on her advice but would have to arrive at decisions by himself. Among the first decision was <sup>the</sup> to one to act human to his newly wedded wife. All went well thereafter.

When some of our Jewish leaders will have the courage to throw into the discard most of the advice and the directions that our sages provided us with, and the Jewish people will learn to make its own decisions, we shall be emancipated from the incubus of the past and all will be well with us.

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Tuesday, June 9, 1931

After a violent inner struggle I decided not to go on with the preparation of the paper on "The Attitude of Conservative Judaism toward Biblical Criticism" which I had promised to read before the convention of the Rabbinic Assembly. This decision was motivated by so many reasons and of such complex character that I am not inclined to go to the trouble of stating them. If I do so it is only to illustrate the truth so often stressed that no act of ours, especially one involving choice, but is motivated by multiple causes.





One reason was the unduly slow progress I was making in the writing of the paper. That slowness was in turn caused by the awareness of having to address an unfriendly audience, or at least one that would number a good many who would take a hostile attitude toward my attempt to combat supernaturalism. Another reason was the apprehension that I might get myself in trouble with the Faculty who might even go so far as to ask my resignation. I would not mind if they would take such a step on the appearance of the book "Judaism as a Civilization." There my negations are given in a constructive and affirmative setting. But an isolated statement about Biblical Criticism which would have to be destructive of all that false front known as Traditional Judaism which the Seminary and the United Synagogue are putting up, would place me in a false light. Then again I found myself in the few pages that I had written not only saying the same thing I have said in the book but saying it in much more elementary fashion.

There have also been contributory reasons. I have been reading John Dewey's Individualism Old and New. Everytime I read anything by Dewey I become painfully aware of the futility and irrelevance of most of the problems I am occupied with. Whereas most of the books, articles and essays I read furnish one with ideas I can utilize in the course of my teaching and preaching, his writings give me heartache. As I read this last book of his I said to myself "Why waste my energies trying to convince a few old fogies or challenging a handful of insincere so-called spiritual leaders whom no body takes seriously, to give up the dogma of supernaturalism, when there are such pressing problems as those Dewey suggests that call for a complete revolution in economic and political relationships, and upon the solution of which the immediate happiness of a whole world depends. And even Dewey is



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